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SIR WALTER SCOTT'S  
IVANHOE





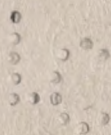


# SIR WALTER SCOTT'S IVANHOE

ABRIDGED BY  
HERBERT P. WILLIAMS



ILLUSTRATED



D. APPLETON AND COMPANY  
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## DEDICATION

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MY DEAR E.:

A long time ago there lived on the banks of the Tweed a jolly and companionable Scottish gentleman, who wrote some of the best stories in our language. He was kindly and lovable always, and brave and noble in misfortune; and he was such a fine fellow that everybody was glad and proud to be in his company. There in the study of his beautiful mansion of Abbotsford, which you and I will visit when you are older, this Walter Scott—he was not Sir Walter then—wrote, almost eighty years before you were born, one of the most delightful romances in the world, and called it “Ivanhoe.” Three years later he wrote the liveliest and most stirring adventure story that ever was, telling how a high-spirited and manly young fellow from Scotland, one Quentin Durward, won his spurs in France in 1468. Still later he wrote one of the prettiest stories of love and mystery, of unfailing courage and true devotion, telling what part the famous Talisman played in King Richard’s warfare in the Holy Land against the princely Saladin.

He wrote these books for grown people; but because they are such fine stories, and so interesting and fascinating—because, in short, they are more entertaining than almost any other books ever written—boys and girls have



always relished them immensely. You will miss a lot of fun if you don't read them. And there is another thing about these books, E. They are not simply capital stories, thrilling and absorbing from beginning to end. They amount to something, these tales of chivalry; they have character; they are literature; and you will be glad all your life of having read them.

When I was a boy, children played "Ivanhoe." We had read it so often that we knew pages of it by heart, especially those telling how the mysterious Disinherited Knight overthrew the haughty Templar in the Tournament at Ashby, and how the equally mysterious Black Knight bore himself at the storming of Torquilstone; and we quoted these passages to each other in our play. Also, we knew how Quentin Durward saved the Lady Isabelle of Croye, on that wild night, when Schonwaldt was stormed and captured by William de la Marck and the discontented people of Liege; and how it fared with the gallant Sir Kenneth of Scotland during the night when he was set to watch and protect the banner of England on St. George's Mount.

But way back in the Eighteen-twenties, when "Ivanhoe" was first published, people had much more leisure than they have now. Nobody could ever have been in a hurry in those days, it would seem, else they would not have had time to read such long-winded books as they did read. People are busier nowadays; and this is especially true of you children, who learn so much more, both in school and out, than your great-grandparents learned. You don't want to read the long historical descriptions in "Ivanhoe" or



“Quentin Durward” or “The Talisman.” Perhaps you will read them when you are older; but they get in the way of the story, and the story is what we want, isn’t it?

So I have made these books for you, in the hope that you will enjoy them. I have left out the accounts of the history of the reign of King Richard the Lion-hearted, who was one of the bravest and manliest kings that England ever had, and whose acquaintance you will make in the happiest way in these books; and descriptions of the state of things in France in the reign of Louis XI, who was unscrupulous and tricky, as you will find in “Quentin Durward,” but likable in a way for his cleverness in managing men and things. Also, I have omitted or cut down essays on the way people thought and felt in those days; and when the author took several pages to tell about somebody’s clothes, I thought you would be satisfied with a briefer account. But I have left all of each story there—every bit of it—just as Scott wrote it, except that I have translated foreign words and phrases; and you won’t have to skip, and you won’t have to wade through dull passages. In a word, I have merely shortened these books for the greater delight of you and other children of the present day.

H. P. W.

NEW YORK, N. Y.,  
July 18, 1910.







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# IVANHOE

## CHAPTER I

### GURTH AND WAMBA

IN that pleasant district of merry England which is watered by the river Don, there extended in ancient times a large forest, covering the greater part of the beautiful hills and valleys which lie between Sheffield and the pleasant town of Doncaster. Such being our chief scene, the date of our story refers to a period towards the end of the reign of Richard I., when his return from his long captivity had become an event rather wished than hoped for by his despairing subjects.

The sun was setting upon one of the rich, grassy glades of the forest. Hundreds of broad-headed, short-stemmed, wide-branched oaks flung their gnarled arms over a thick carpet of the most delicious greensward. In some places they were intermingled with beeches, hollies, and copsewood of various descriptions, so closely as totally to intercept the level beams of the sinking sun; in others they receded from each other, forming long, sweeping vistas.

The human figures which completed this landscape were in number two, partaking, in their dress and appearance, of that wild and rustic character which be-



longed to the woodlands of the West Riding of Yorkshire at that early period. The eldest of these men had a stern, savage, and wild aspect. His garment was of the simplest form imaginable, being a close jacket with sleeves, composed of the tanned skin of some animal, which reached from the throat to the knees, and served at once all the usual purposes of body-clothing. Sandals, bound with thongs made of boar's hide, protected the feet, and a roll of thin leather was twined artificially round the legs, and, ascending above the calf, left the knees bare, like those of a Scottish Highlander. To make the jacket sit yet more close to the body, it was gathered at the middle by a broad leathern belt, secured by a brass buckle. The man had no covering upon his head, which was defended only by his own thick hair, matted and twisted together, and scorched by the influence of the sun into a rusty, dark-red color. One part of his dress was a brass ring, resembling a dog's collar, but without any opening, and soldered fast round his neck, so loose as to form no impediment to his breathing, yet so tight as to be incapable of being removed, excepting by the use of the file. On this singular gorget was engraved, in Saxon characters, an inscription of the following purport: "Gurth, the son of Beowulph, is the born thrall of Cedric of Rotherwood."

Beside the swineherd, for such was Gurth's occupation, was seated a person about ten years younger in appearance, and whose dress, though resembling his companion's in form, was of better materials, and of a more fantastic description. His jacket had been stained a bright purple hue, upon which there had been some attempt to paint grotesque ornaments in different colors. He had thin silver bracelets upon his arms, and on his



neck a collar of the same metal, bearing the inscription, "Wamba, the son of Witless, is the thrall of Cedric of Rotherwood." This personage had the same sort of sandals with his companion, but instead of the roll of leather thong, his legs were cased in a sort of gaiters, of which one was red and the other yellow. He was provided also with a cap, having around it more than one bell, about the size of those attached to hawks, which jingled as he turned his head to one side or other. His half-crazed, half-cunning expression of countenance sufficiently pointed him out as belonging to the race of domestic clowns, or jesters, maintained in the houses of the wealthy, to help away the tedium of those lingering hours which they were obliged to spend within doors. He had neither horn nor knife, being probably considered as belonging to a class whom it is esteemed dangerous to entrust with edge-tools. In place of these, he was equipped with a sword of lath.

The demeanor of the serf, or bondsman, was sad and sullen; his aspect was bent on the ground with an air of deep dejection. The looks of Wamba, on the other hand, indicated a sort of vacant curiosity, and fidgety impatience of any posture of repose, together with the utmost self-satisfaction respecting his own situation and the appearance which he made. The dialogue which they maintained between them was carried on in Anglo-Saxon, which was universally spoken by the inferior classes, excepting the Norman soldiers and the immediate personal dependants of the great feudal nobles.

"The curse of St. Withold upon these infernal porkers!" said the swineherd, after blowing his horn obstreperously, to collect together the scattered herd of swine, which, answering his call with notes equally melodious, made, however, no haste to remove themselves from the



luxurious banquet of beech-mast and acorns on which they had fattened. "The curse of St. Withold upon them and upon me!" said Gurth; "if the two-legged wolf snap not up some of them ere nightfall, I am no true man. Here, Fangs, Fangs!" he ejaculated at the top of his voice to a ragged, wolfish-looking dog, which ran limping about as if with the purpose of seconding his master in collecting the refractory grunTERS, but which, in fact, only drove them hither and thither. "A devil draw the teeth of him," said Gurth, "and the mother of mischief confound the ranger of the forest, that cuts the fore-claws off our dogs, and makes them unfit for their trade! Wamba, up and help me an thou beest a man; take a turn round the back o' the hill to gain the wind on them; and when thou'st got the weather-gauge, thou may'st drive them before thee as gently as so many innocent lambs."

"Truly," said Wamba, without stirring from the spot, "I have consulted my legs upon this matter, and they are altogether of opinion that to carry my gay garments through these sloughs would be an act of unfriendship to my sovereign person and royal wardrobe; wherefore, Gurth, I advise thee to call off Fangs, and leave the herd to their destiny, which, whether they meet with bands of traveling soldiers, or of outlaws, or of wandering pilgrims, can be little else than to be converted into Normans before morning, to thy no small ease and comfort."

"The swine turned Normans to my comfort!" quoth Gurth; "expound that to me, Wamba, for my brain is too dull and my mind too vexed to read riddles."

"Why, how call you those grunting brutes running about on four legs?" demanded Wamba.

"Swine, fool, swine," said the herd; "every fool knows that."



“ And swine is good Saxon,” said the Jester; “ but how call you the sow when she is flayed, and drawn, and quartered, and hung up by the heels, like a traitor? ”

“ Pork,” answered the swineherd.

“ I am very glad every fool knows that too,” said Wamba, “ and pork, I think, is good Norman-French; and so when the brute lives, and is in the charge of a Saxon slave, she goes by her Saxon name; but becomes a Norman, and is called pork, when she is carried to the castle hall to feast among the nobles. What dost thou think of this, friend Gurth, ha? ”

“ It is but too true doctrine, friend Wamba, however it got into thy fool’s pate.”

“ Nay, I can tell you more,” said Wamba: “ there is old Alderman Ox continues to hold his Saxon epithet while he is under the charge of serfs and bondsmen such as thou, but becomes Beef, a fiery French gallant, when he arrives before the worshipful jaws that are destined to consume him. Mynherr Calf, too, becomes Monsieur de Veau in the like manner: he is Saxon when he requires tendance, and takes a Norman name when he becomes matter of enjoyment.”

“ By St. Dunstan,” answered Gurth, “ thou speakest but sad truths; little is left to us but the air we breathe, and that appears to have been reserved with much hesitation, solely for the purpose of enabling us to endure the tasks they lay upon our shoulders. God’s blessing on our Master Cedric, he hath done the work of a man in standing in the gap; but Reginald Front-de-Bœuf is coming down to this country in person, and we shall soon see how little Cedric’s trouble will avail him.— Here, here,” he exclaimed again, raising his voice, “ So ho! so ho! well done, Fangs! thou hast them all before thee now, and bring’st them on bravely, lad.”



“ Gurth,” said the Jester, “ I know thou thinkest me a fool, or thou wouldst not be so rash in putting thy head into my mouth. One word to Reginald Front-de-Bœuf or Philip de Malvoisin, that thou hast spoken treason against the Norman — and thou art but a castaway swineherd; thou wouldst waver on one of these trees as a terror to all evil speakers against dignities.”

“ Dog, thou wouldst not betray me,” said Gurth, “ after having led me on to speak so much at disadvantage? ”

“ Betray thee! ” answered the Jester; “ no, that were the trick of a wise man; a fool cannot half so well help himself.— But soft, whom have we here? ” he said, listening to the trampling of several horses which became then audible.

“ Never mind whom,” answered Gurth, who had now got his herd before him, and, with the aid of Fangs, was driving them down one of the long, dim vistas.

“ Nay, but I must see the riders,” answered Wamba; “ perhaps they are come from Fairyland with a message from King Oberon.”

“ A murrain take thee! ” rejoined the swineherd; “ wilt thou talk of such things, while a terrible storm of thunder and lightning is raging within a few miles of us! Thou canst play the rational if thou wilt; credit me for once, and let us home ere the storm begins to rage, for the night will be fearful.”

Wamba seemed to feel the force of this appeal, and accompanied his companion, who began his journey after catching up a long quarter-staff which lay upon the grass beside him.



## CHAPTER II

### THE PRIOR AND THE TEMPLAR SEEK A NIGHT'S LODGING.

THE horsemen soon overtook them. Their numbers amounted to ten men, of whom the two who rode foremost seemed to be persons of considerable importance, and the others their attendants.

One of these personages was an ecclesiastic of high rank; his dress was that of a Cistercian Monk, but composed of materials much finer than those which the rule of that order admitted. He rode upon a well-fed, ambling mule, whose furniture was highly decorated, and whose bridle was ornamented with silver bells. A lay brother, one of those who followed in the train, had, for his use on other occasions, one of the most handsome Spanish jennets ever bred in Andalusia, which merchants used at that time to import, with great trouble and risk, for the use of persons of wealth and distinction.

His companion was a man past forty, thin, strong, tall, and muscular; an athletic figure, in which long fatigue and constant exercise seemed to have left none of the softer part of the human form, having reduced the whole to brawn, bones, and sinews. High features, naturally strong and powerfully expressive, had been burnt almost into Negro blackness by constant exposure to the tropical sun. His keen, piercing, dark eyes told in every glance a history of difficulties subdued and dangers dared.

The upper dress of this personage resembled that of his companion in shape, being a long monastic mantle.



This upper robe concealed a shirt of linked mail, with sleeves and gloves of the same, curiously plaited and interwoven, as flexible to the body as those which are now wrought in the stocking-loom out of less obdurate materials. The fore-part of his thighs were also covered with linked mail; the knees and feet were defended by thin plates of steel, ingeniously jointed upon each other; and mail hose, reaching from the ankle to the knee, effectually protected the legs, and completed the rider's defensive armor.

He rode a strong hackney for the road, to save his gallant war-horse, which a squire led behind, fully accoutered for battle. A second squire held aloft his master's lance, from the extremity of which fluttered a small banderole, or streamer. These two squires were followed by two attendants, whose dark visages, white turbans, and the Oriental form of their garments showed them to be natives of some distant Eastern country.

This cavalcade attracted the curiosity of Wamba, and even that of his less volatile companion. The monk they instantly knew to be the Prior of Jorvaulx Abbey, well known for many miles around as a lover of the chase and the banquet. Our Saxon serfs made their rude obeisance, and received Prior Aymer's "Bless you, my children," in return.

But the singular appearance of his companion and his attendants arrested their attention and excited their wonder, and they could scarcely attend to the Prior of Jorvaulx's question, when he demanded if they knew of any place of harborage in the vicinity.

"I asked you, my children," said the Prior, raising his voice, and using the *lingua Franca*, or mixed language, in which the Norman and Saxon races conversed with each other, "if there be in this neighborhood any good



man who, for the love of God and devotion to Mother Church, will give two of her humblest servants, with their train, a night's hospitality and refreshment? "

" If the reverend fathers," said Wamba, " loved good cheer and soft lodging, few miles of riding would carry them to the Priory of Brinxworth, where their quality could not but secure them the most honorable reception; or, if they preferred spending a penitential evening, they might turn down yonder wild glade, which would bring them to the hermitage of Copmanhurst, where a pious anchoret would make them sharers for the night of the shelter of his roof and the benefit of his prayers."

The Prior shook his head at both proposals.

" Mine honest friend," said he, " if the jangling of thy bells had not dizzied thine understanding, thou mightst know that we churchmen do not exhaust each other's hospitality, but rather require that of the laity, giving them thus an opportunity to serve God in honoring and relieving His appointed servants."

" It is true," replied Wamba, " that I, being but an ass, am, nevertheless, honored to bear the bells as well as your reverence's mule; notwithstanding, I did conceive that the charity of Mother Church and her servants might be said, with other charity, to begin at home."

" A truce to thine insolence, fellow," said the armed rider, breaking in on his prattle with a high and stern voice, " and tell us, if thou canst, the road to —— How call'd you your Franklin, Prior Aymer? "

" Cedric," answered the Prior; " Cedric the Saxon.—Tell me, good fellow, are we near his dwelling, and can you show us the road? "

" The road will be uneasy to find," answered Gurth, who broke silence for the first time, " and the family of Cedric retire early to rest."



“Tush, tell not me, fellow!” said the military rider; “’tis easy for them to arise and supply the wants of travelers such as we are, who will not stoop to beg the hospitality which we have a right to command.”

“I know not,” said Gurth, sullenly, “if I should show the way to my master’s house to those who demand as a right the shelter which most are fain to ask as a favor.”

“Do you dispute with me, slave!” said the soldier; and, setting spurs to his horse, he caused him to make a demi-volte across the path, raising at the same time the riding rod which he held in his hand, with a purpose of chastising what he considered as the insolence of the peasant.

Gurth darted at him a savage and revengeful scowl, and with a fierce yet hesitating motion laid his hand on the haft of his knife; but the interference of Prior Aymer, who pushed his mule betwixt his companion and the swineherd, prevented the meditated violence.

“Nay, by St. Mary, brother Brian, you must not think you are now in Palestine, predominating over heathen Turks and infidel Saracens.—Tell me, good fellow,” said he to Wamba, and seconded his speech by a small piece of silver coin, “the way to Cedric the Saxon’s; you cannot be ignorant of it, and it is your duty to direct the wanderer even when his character is less sanctified than ours.”

“In truth, venerable father,” answered the Jester, “the Saracen head of your right reverend companion has frightened out of mine the way home; I am not sure I shall get there to-night myself.”

“Tush,” said the Abbot, “thou canst tell us if thou wilt. This reverend brother has been all his life engaged in fighting among the Saracens for the recovery of the Holy Sepulcher; he is of the order of Knights



Templars, whom you may have heard of; he is half a monk, half a soldier."

"If he is but half a monk," said the Jester, "he should not be wholly unreasonable with those whom he meets upon the road, even if they should be in no hurry to answer questions that no way concern them."

"I forgive thy wit," replied the Abbot, "on condition thou wilt show me the way to Cedric's mansion."

"Well, then," answered Wamba, "your reverences must hold on this path till you come to a sunken cross, of which scarce a cubit's length remains above ground; then take the path to the left, for there are four which meet at Sunken Cross, and I trust your reverences will obtain shelter before the storm comes on."

The Abbot thanked his sage adviser; and the cavalcade, setting spurs to their horses, rode on as men do who wish to reach their inn before the bursting of a night-storm.

As their horses' hoofs died away, Gurth said to his companion, "If they follow thy wise direction, the reverend fathers will hardly reach Rotherwood this night."

"No," said the Jester, grinning, "but they may reach Sheffield if they have good luck, and that is as fit a place for them. I am not so bad a woodsman as to show the dog where the deer lies, if I have no mind he should chase him."

"Thou art right," said Gurth; "it were ill for Cedric to quarrel, as is most likely he would, with this military monk. But, like good servants, let us hear and see, and say nothing."

We return to the riders, who had soon left the bondsmen far behind. "What mean these fellows by their capricious insolence?" said the Templar to the Cister-



cian, "and why did you prevent me from chastising it?"

"Marry, brother Brian," replied the Prior, "touching the one of them, it were hard for me to render a reason for a fool speaking according to his folly; and the other churl is of that savage, fierce, intractable race, some of whom are still to be found among the descendants of the conquered Saxons, and whose supreme pleasure it is to testify, by all means in their power, their aversion to their conquerors."

"I would soon have beat him into courtesy," observed Brian; "I am accustomed to deal with such spirits. Our Turkish captives are as fierce and intractable as Odin himself could have been; yet two months in my household, under the management of my master of the slaves, has made them humble, submissive, serviceable, and observant of your will."

"Aye, but," answered Prior Aymer, "every land has its own manners and fashions; and, besides that beating this fellow could procure us no information respecting the road to Cedric's house, it would have been sure to establish a quarrel betwixt you and him had we found our way thither. Remember what I told you; this wealthy Franklin is proud, fierce, jealous, and irritable, a withstander of the nobility, and even of his neighbors, Reginald Front-de-Bœuf and Philip Malvoisin, who are no babes to strive with. He stands up so sternly for the privileges of his race, and is so proud of his uninterrupted descent from Hereward, that he is universally called Cedric the Saxon."

"Prior Aymer," said the Templar, "you are a man of gallantry, learned in the study of beauty; but I shall expect much beauty in this celebrated Rowena, to counter-balance the self-denial and forbearance which I must



exert if I am to court the favor of such a seditious churl as you have described her father Cedric."

"Cedric is not her father," replied the Prior, "and is but of remote relation; she is descended from higher blood than even he pretends to. Her guardian, however, he is, self-constituted as I believe; but his ward is as dear to him as if she were his own child. Of her beauty you shall soon be judge."

"Should your boasted beauty," said the Templar, "be weighed in the balance and found wanting, you know our wager?"

"My gold collar," answered the Prior, "against ten butts of Chian wine; — they are mine as securely as if they were already in the convent vaults, under the key of old Dennis, the cellarer."

"And I am myself to be judge," said the Templar, "and I am only to be convicted on my own admission that I have seen no maiden so beautiful since Pentecost was a twelve-month. Ran it not so? — Prior, your collar is in danger; I will wear it over my gorget in the lists of Ashby-de-la-Zouche."

"Win it fairly," said the Prior, "and wear it as ye will; I will trust your giving true response, on your word as a knight and as a churchman. Yet, brother, take my advice, and file your tongue to a little more courtesy than your habits of predominating over infidel captives and Eastern bondsmen have accustomed you. Cedric the Saxon, if offended — and he is no way slack in taking offense — is a man who, without respect to your knighthood, my high office, or the sanctity of either, would clear his house of us, and send us to lodge with the larks, though the hour were midnight. And be careful how you look on Rowena, whom he cherishes with the most jealous care. It is said he banished his only son



from his family for lifting his eyes in the way of affection towards this beauty."

"Well, you have said enough," answered the Templar; "I will for a night put on the needful restraint, and deport me as meekly as a maiden; but as for the fear of his expelling us by violence, myself and squires, with Hamet and Abdalla, will warrant you against that disgrace. Doubt not that we shall be strong enough to make good our quarters."

"We must not let it come so far," answered the Prior. "But here is the clown's sunken cross, and the night is so dark that we can hardly see which of the roads we are to follow. He bid us turn, I think, to the left."

"To the right," said Brian, "to the best of my remembrance."

"To the left — certainly the left; I remember his pointing with his wooden sword."

"Aye, but he held his sword in his left hand, and so pointed across his body with it," said the Templar. "Here is some one either asleep or lying dead at the foot of this cross — Hugo, stir him with the butt-end of thy lance."

This was no sooner done than the figure arose, exclaiming in good French, "Whosoever thou art, it is discourteous in you to disturb my thoughts."

"We did but wish to ask you," said the Prior, "the road to Rotherwood, the abode of Cedric the Saxon."

"I myself am bound thither," replied the stranger; "and if I had a horse I would be your guide, for the way is somewhat intricate."

"Thou shalt have both thanks and reward, my friend," said the Prior, "if thou wilt bring us to Cedric's in safety."

And he caused one of his attendants to mount his own



led horse, and give that upon which he had hitherto ridden to the stranger.

Their conductor pursued an opposite road from that which Wamba had recommended. The path soon led deeper into the woodland, and crossed more than one brook, the approach to which was rendered perilous by the marshes through which it flowed; but the stranger brought the party safely into a wider avenue than any they had yet seen; and, pointing to a large, low, irregular building at the upper extremity, he said to the Prior, "Yonder is Rotherwood, the dwelling of Cedric the Saxon."

This was a joyful intimation to Aymer, whose nerves were none of the strongest. Finding himself now at his ease and near shelter, his curiosity began to awake, and he demanded of the guide who and what he was.

"A Palmer, just returned from the Holy Land," was the answer.

"You had better have tarried there to fight for the recovery of the Holy Sepulcher," said the Templar.

"True, Reverend Sir Knight," answered the Palmer, to whom the appearance of the Templar seemed perfectly familiar; "but when those who are under oath to recover the holy city are found traveling at such a distance from the scene of their duties, can you wonder that a peaceful peasant like me should decline the task which they have abandoned?"

The Templar would have made an angry reply, but was interrupted by the Prior, who expressed his astonishment that their guide, after such long absence, should be so perfectly acquainted with the passes of the forest.

"I was born a native of these parts," answered their guide, and as he made the reply they stood before the



mansion of Cedric — a low, irregular building, containing several courtyards or inclosures, extending over a considerable space of ground, and which, though its size argued the inhabitant to be a person of wealth, differed entirely from the tall, turreted, and castellated buildings in which the Norman nobility resided.

Rotherwood was not, however, without defenses; no habitation, in that disturbed period, could have been so, without the risk of being plundered and burned before the next morning. A deep fosse, or ditch, was drawn round the whole building, and filled with water from a neighboring stream. A double stockade, or palisade, composed of pointed beams, which the adjacent forest supplied, defended the outer and inner bank of the trench. There was an entrance from the west through the outer stockade, which communicated by a drawbridge with a similar opening in the interior defenses.

Before this entrance the Templar wound his horn loudly; for the rain, which had long threatened, began now to descend with great violence.



## CHAPTER III

### CEDRIC THE SAXON AT HOME

IN a hall, the height of which was greatly disproportioned to its extreme length and width, a long oaken table formed of rough-hewn planks stood ready prepared for the evening meal of Cedric the Saxon. The appointments of the mansion partook of the rude simplicity of the Saxon period, which Cedric piqued himself upon maintaining. For about one quarter of the length of the apartment the floor was raised a step, and this space, which was called the dais, was occupied only by the principal members of the family and visitors of distinction. For this purpose, a table richly covered with scarlet cloth was placed across the platform, from the middle of which ran the longer and lower board, at which the domestics and inferior persons fed, down towards the bottom of the hall. The whole resembled the form of the letter T.

The walls of this upper end of the hall, as far as the dais extended, were covered with hangings or curtains, and upon the floor there was a carpet. Over the lower range of table the rough, plastered walls were left bare, and the earthen floor was uncarpeted; the board was uncovered by a cloth, and rude, massive benches supplied the place of chairs.

In the center of the upper table were placed two chairs more elevated than the rest, for the master and mistress of the family. To each of these chairs was added a



footstool, curiously carved and inlaid with ivory, which mark of distinction was peculiar to them. One of these seats was at present occupied by Cedric the Saxon. A short boar-spear, with a broad and bright steel head, reclined against the back of his chair, which served him, when he walked abroad, for the purpose of a staff or of a weapon, as chance might require.

Several domestics watched the looks and waited the commands of the Saxon dignitary. Other attendants there were of a different description: two or three large and shaggy greyhounds, such as were then employed in hunting the stag and wolf; as many slow-hounds; and one or two of the smaller dogs, now called terriers.

Cedric was in no very placid state of mind. The Lady Rowena, who had been absent to attend an evening mass at a distant church, had but just returned, and was changing her garments, which had been wetted by the storm. There were as yet no tidings of Gurth and his charge, which should long since have been driven home from the forest; and such was the insecurity of the period as to render it probable that the delay might be explained by some depredation of the outlaws, with whom the adjacent forest abounded, or by the violence of some neighboring baron. The matter was of consequence, for great part of the domestic wealth of the Saxon proprietors consisted in herds of swine.

Besides these subjects of anxiety, the Saxon thane was impatient for the presence of his favorite clown, Wamba, whose jests, such as they were, served for a sort of seasoning to his evening meal. Cedric's displeasure was expressed in broken sentences, partly muttered to himself, partly addressed to the domestics who stood around—"Why tarries the Lady Rowena?"

"She is but changing her head-gear," replied a female



attendant; “you would not wish her to sit down to the banquet in her hood and kirtle? and no lady within the shire can be quicker in arraying herself than my mistress.”

This undeniable argument produced a sort of acquiescent “Umph!” on the part of the Saxon, with the addition, “I wish her devotion may choose fair weather for the next visit to St. John’s Kirk.—But what, in the name of ten devils,” continued he, “keeps Gurth so long a-field?”

Oswald, the cupbearer, modestly suggested, “That it was scarce an hour since the tolling of the curfew”—an ill-chosen apology, since it turned upon a topic so harsh to Saxon ears.

“The foul fiend,” exclaimed Cedric, “take the curfew-bell! The curfew!” he added, pausing—“aye, the curfew, which compels true men to extinguish their lights, that thieves and robbers may work their deeds in darkness! Aye, the curfew! Reginald Front-de-Bœuf and Philip de Malvoisin know the use of the curfew. I shall hear, I guess, that my property has been swept off to save from starving the hungry banditti whom they cannot support but by theft and robbery. My faithful slave is murdered, and my goods are taken for a prey—and Wamba—where is Wamba? Said not some one he had gone forth with Gurth?”

Oswald replied in the affirmative.

“Aye! why, this is better and better! he is carried off too, the Saxon fool, to serve the Norman lord. Fools are we all indeed that serve them, and fitter subjects for their scorn and laughter than if we were born with but half our wits. But I will be avenged,” he added, starting from his chair in impatience at the supposed injury, and catching hold of his boar-spear; “I will go with my



complaint to the great council. I have friends, I have followers — man to man will I appeal the Norman to the lists. Let him come in his plate and his mail, and all that can render cowardice bold; I have sent such a javelin as this through a stronger fence than three of their war shields! — Haply they think me old; but they shall find, alone and childless as I am, the blood of Hereward is in the veins of Cedric.— Ah, Wilfred, Wilfred!” he exclaimed in a lower tone, “couldst thou have ruled thine unreasonable passion, thy father had not been left in his age like the solitary oak that throws out its shattered and unprotected branches against the full sweep of the tempest!”

From his musing Cedric was suddenly awakened by the blast of a horn, which was replied to by the clamorous yells and barking of all the dogs in the hall.

“To the gate, knaves!” said the Saxon hastily, as soon as the tumult was so much appeased that the dependants could hear his voice. “See what tidings that horn tells us of.”

Returning in less than three minutes, a warder announced, “That the Prior Aymer of Jorvaulx, and the good knight Brian de Bois-Guilbert, commander of the valiant and venerable order of Knights Templars, with a small retinue, requested hospitality and lodging for the night, being on their way to a tournament which was to be held not far from Ashby-de-la-Zouche on the second day from the present.”

“Aymer — the Prior Aymer! Brian de Bois-Guilbert!” muttered Cedric — “Normans both; but, Norman or Saxon, the hospitality of Rotherwood must not be impeached: they are welcome, since they have chosen to halt — more welcome would they have been to have ridden further on their way. But it were unworthy to



murmur for a night's lodging and a night's food; in the quality of guests, at least, even Normans must suppress their insolence.— Go, Hundebert," he added, to a sort of major-domo who stood behind him with a white wand; "take six of the attendants and introduce the strangers to the guests' lodging. Look after their horses and mules, and see their train lack nothing. Let them have change of vestments if they require it, and fire, and water to wash, and wine and ale; and bid the cooks add what they hastily can to our evening meal; and let it be put on the board when those strangers are ready to share it. Say to them, Hundebert, that Cedric would himself bid them welcome, but he is under a vow never to step more than three steps from the dais of his own hall to meet any who shares not the blood of Saxon royalty. Begone! see them carefully tended."

The major-domo departed with several attendants to execute his master's commands. "The Prior Aymer!" repeated Cedric, looking at Oswald, "the brother, if I mistake not, of Giles de Mauleverer, now lord of Middleham?" Oswald made a respectful sign of assent. "His brother sits in the seat and usurps the patrimony of a better race — the race of Ulfgar of Middleham; but what Norman lord doth not the same? This Prior, is, they say, a free and jovial priest, who loves the wine-cup and the bugle-horn better than bell and book. Good; let him come, he shall be welcome. How named ye the Templar?"

"Brian de Bois-Guilbert."

"Bois-Guilbert!" said Cedric, "Bois-Guilbert! That name has been spread wide both for good and evil. They say he is valiant as the bravest of his order; but stained with their usual vices — pride, arrogance and cruelty — a hard-hearted man, who knows neither fear



of earth nor awe of heaven. So say the few warriors who have returned from Palestine.— Well, it is but for one night; he shall be welcome, too. Oswald, broach the oldest wine-cask; place the best mead, the mightiest ale, the most sparkling cider, the most odoriferous pigments upon the board; fill the largest horns — Templars and Abbots love good wines and good measure.— Elgitha, let thy Lady Rowena know we shall not this night expect her in the hall, unless such be her especial pleasure.”

“ But it will be her especial pleasure,” answered Elgitha, with great readiness, “ for she is ever desirous to hear the latest news from Palestine.”

Cedric darted at the forward damsel a glance of hasty resentment; but Rowena and whatever belonged to her were privileged, and secure from his anger. He only replied, “ Silence, maiden; thy tongue outruns thy discretion. Say my message to thy mistress, and let her do her pleasure. Here, at least, the descendant of Alfred still reigns a princess.”

Elgitha left the apartment.

“ Palestine! ” repeated the Saxon; “ Palestine! how many ears are turned to the tales which dissolute crusaders or hypocritical pilgrims bring from that fatal land! I, too, might ask — I, too, might inquire — I, too, might listen with a beating heart to fables which the wily strollers devise to cheat us into hospitality; but no — the son who has disobeyed me is no longer mine; nor will I concern myself more for his fate.”

The folding doors at the bottom of the hall were cast wide, and, preceded by the major-domo with his wand, and four domestics bearing blazing torches, the guests of the evening entered the apartment.



## CHAPTER IV

### “ PLACE FOR THE LADY ROWENA ”

PRIOR AYMER had taken the opportunity afforded him of changing his riding robe for one of yet more costly materials. The appearance of the Knight Templar was also changed; and his dress was as rich, and his appearance far more commanding, than that of his companion.

These two dignified persons were followed by their respective attendants, and at a more humble distance by their guide, whose figure had nothing more remarkable than it derived from the usual weeds of a pilgrim. Observing that the lower table scarce afforded room sufficient for the domestics of Cedric and the retinue of his guests, he withdrew to a settle placed beside, and almost under, one of the large chimneys, and seemed to employ himself in drying his garments, until the hospitality of the steward should supply him with refreshments in the place he had chosen apart.

Cedric rose to receive his guests with an air of dignified hospitality, and, descending from the dais, or elevated part of his hall, made three steps towards them, and then awaited their approach.

“ I grieve,” he said, “ reverend Prior, that my vow binds me to advance no farther upon this floor of my fathers, even to receive such guests as you and this valiant Knight of the Holy Temple. Let me also pray that you will excuse my speaking to you in my native language, and that you will reply in the same if your



knowledge of it permits; if not, I sufficiently understand Norman to follow your meaning."

"Vows," said the Abbot, "are the knots which tie us to Heaven, and are therefore to be discharged, unless Holy Church shall pronounce the contrary. And respecting language, I willingly hold communication in that spoken by my respected grandmother, Hilda of Middleham, who died in odor of sanctity, little short, if we may presume to say so, of her glorious namesake, the blessed Saint Hilda of Whitby — God be gracious to her soul!"

When the Prior had ceased what he meant as a conciliatory harangue, his companion said briefly and emphatically, "I speak ever French, the language of King Richard and his nobles; but I understand English sufficiently to communicate with the natives of the country."

Cedric darted at the speaker one of those hasty and impatient glances which comparisons between the two rival nations seldom failed to call forth; but, recollecting the duties of hospitality, he suppressed further show of resentment, and, motioning with his hand, caused his guests to assume two seats a little lower than his own, but placed close beside him, and gave a signal that the evening meal should be placed upon the board.

While the attendants hastened to obey Cedric's commands, his eye distinguished Gurth, the swineherd, who, with his companion Wamba, had just entered the hall. "Send these loitering knaves up hither," said the Saxon, impatiently. And when the culprits came before the dais — "How comes it, villains, that you have loitered abroad so late as this? Hast thou brought home thy charge, sirrah Gurth, or hast thou left them to robbers and marauders?"

"The herd is safe, so please ye," said Gurth.



“But it does not please me, thou knave,” said Cedric, “that I should be made to suppose otherwise for two hours. I tell thee, shackles and the prison-house shall punish the next offense of this kind.”

Gurth, knowing his master’s irritable temper, attempted no exculpation; but the Jester, who could presume upon Cedric’s tolerance, by virtue of his privileges as a fool, replied for them both: “In troth, uncle Cedric, you are neither wise nor reasonable to-night.”

“How, sir!” said his master; “you shall to the porter’s lodge and taste of the discipline there, if you give your foolery such license.”

“First let your wisdom tell me,” said Wamba, “is it just and reasonable to punish one person for the fault of another?”

“Certainly not, fool,” answered Cedric.

“Then why should you shackle poor Gurth, uncle, for the fault of his dog Fangs? for I dare be sworn we lost not a minute by the way, when we had got our herd together, which Fangs did not manage until we heard the vesper-bell.”

“Then hang up Fangs,” said Cedric, turning hastily towards the swineherd, “if the fault is his, and get thee another dog.”

“Under favor, uncle,” said the Jester, “that were still somewhat on the bow-hand of fair justice; for it was no fault of Fangs that he was lame and could not gather the herd, but the fault of those that struck off two of his foreclaws.”

“And who dared to lame an animal which belonged to my bondsman?” said the Saxon, kindling in wrath.

“Marry, that did old Hubert,” said Wamba, “Sir Philip de Malvoisin’s keeper of the chase. He caught Fangs strolling in the forest, and said he chased the



deer contrary to his master's right, as warden of the walk."

"The foul fiend take Malvoisin," answered the Saxon, "and his keeper both! I will teach them that the wood was disforested in terms of the great Forest Charter. But enough of this. Go to, knave,—go to thy place; and thou, Gurth, get thee another dog, and should the keeper dare to touch it, I will mar his archery; the curse of a coward on my head, if I strike not off the forefinger of his right hand! he shall draw bowstring no more.—I crave your pardon, my worthy guests. I am beset here with neighbors that match your infidels, Sir Knight, in Holy Land. But your homely fare is before you; feed, and let welcome make amends for hard fare."

When the repast was about to commence, the major-domo, or steward, suddenly raising his wand, said aloud: "Forbear!—Place for the Lady Rowena." A side-door at the upper end of the hall now opened, behind the banquet table, and Rowena, followed by four female attendants, entered the apartment. Cedric hastened to meet her, and to conduct her, with respectful ceremony, to the elevated seat at his own right hand. All stood up to receive her; and, replying to their courtesy by a mute gesture of salutation, she moved gracefully forward to assume her place at the board. Ere she had time to do so, the Templar whispered to the Prior: "I shall wear no collar of gold of yours at the tournament. The Chian wine is your own."

When Rowena perceived the Knight Templar's eyes bent on her, she drew with dignity the veil around her face, as an intimation that the determined freedom of his glance was disagreeable.

Cedric saw the motion and its cause. "Sir Templar," said he, "the cheeks of our Saxon maidens have seen too



little of the sun to enable them to bear the fixed glance of a crusader.”

“If I have offended,” replied Sir Brian, “I crave your pardon — that is, I crave the Lady Rowena’s pardon — for my humility will carry me no lower.”

“The Lady Rowena,” said the Prior, “has punished us all, in chastising the boldness of my friend. Let me hope she will be less cruel to the splendid train which are to meet at the tournament.”

“Our going thither,” said Cedric, “is uncertain. I love not these vanities, which were unknown to my fathers when England was free.”

“Let us hope, nevertheless,” said the Prior, “our company may determine you to travel thitherward; when the roads are so unsafe, the escort of Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert is not to be despised.”

“Sir Prior,” answered the Saxon, “wheresoever I have traveled in this land, I have hitherto found myself, with the assistance of my good sword and faithful followers, in no respect needful of other aid. At present, if we indeed journey to Ashby-de-la-Zouche, we do so with my noble neighbor and countryman, Athelstane of Coningsburgh, and with such a train as would set outlaws and feudal enemies at defiance.—I drink to you, Sir Prior, in this cup of wine, which I trust your taste will approve, and I thank you for your courtesy.”

“And I,” said the Templar, filling his goblet, “drink wassail to the fair Rowena; for since her namesake introduced the word into England, has never been one more worthy of such a tribute.”

“I will spare your courtesy, Sir Knight,” said Rowena with dignity, and without unveiling herself; “or rather I will tax it so far as to require of you the latest news from Palestine.”



“ I have little of importance to say, lady,” answered Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, “ excepting the confirmed tidings of a truce with Saladin.”

“ These truces with the infidels,” exclaimed Wamba, “ make an old man of me! ”

“ Go to, knave — how so? ” said Cedric, his features prepared to receive favorably the expected jest.

“ Because,” answered Wamba, “ I remember three of them in my day, each of which was to endure for the course of fifty years; so that, by computation, I must be at least a hundred and fifty years old.”

Conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of the porter's page, who announced that there was a stranger at the gate, imploring admittance and hospitality.

“ Admit him,” said Cedric, “ be he who or what he may; — a night like that which roars without, compels even wild animals to herd with tame, and to seek the protection of man, their mortal foe, rather than perish by the elements. Let his wants be ministered to with all care; look to it, Oswald.”

And the steward left the banqueting-hall to see the commands of his patron obeyed.



## CHAPTER V

“ SECOND TO NONE! ”

OSWALD, returning, whispered into the ear of his master, “ It is a Jew, who calls himself Isaac of York; is it fit I should marshal him into the hall? ”

“ Let Gurth do thine office, Oswald,” said Wamba, with his usual effrontery; “ the swineherd will be a fit usher to the Jew.”

“ St. Mary,” said the Abbot, crossing himself, “ an unbelieving Jew, and admitted into this presence! ”

“ A dog Jew,” echoed the Templar, “ to approach a defender of the Holy Sepulcher? ”

“ By my faith,” said Wamba, “ it would seem the Templars love the Jews’ inheritance better than they do their company.”

“ Peace, my worthy guests,” said Cedric; “ my hospitality must not be bounded by your dislikes. If Heaven bore with the whole nation of stiff-necked unbelievers for more years than a layman can number, we may endure the presence of one Jew for a few hours. But I constrain no man to converse or to feed with him.—Let him have a board and a morsel apart. Hush, for here he comes.”

Introduced with little ceremony, and advancing with fear and hesitation, and many a bow of deep humility, a tall, thin old man, who, however, had lost by the habit of stooping much of his actual height, approached the lower end of the board. Cedric himself coldly nodded in an-



swer to the Jew's repeated salutations, and signed to him to take place at the lower end of the table, where, however, no one offered to make room for him. On the contrary, as he passed along the file, the Saxon domestics squared their shoulders, the attendants of the Abbot crossed themselves, with looks of pious horror, and the very heathen Saracens curled up their whiskers with indignation.

While Isaac thus stood an outcast in the present society, like his people among the nations, looking in vain for welcome or resting-place, the Pilgrim, who sat by the chimney, took compassion upon him, and resigned his seat, saying briefly, "Old man, my garments are dried, my hunger is appeased; thou art both wet and fasting." So saying, he gathered together and brought to a flame the decaying brands which lay scattered on the ample hearth, took from the larger board a mess of pottage and seethed kid, placed it upon the small table at which he had himself supped, and, without waiting the Jew's thanks, went to the other side of the hall.

"I marvel, worthy Cedric," said the Abbot, "that, great as your predilection is for your own manly language, you do not receive the Norman-French into your favor, so far at least as the mystery of wood-craft and hunting is concerned."

"Good Father Aymer," said the Saxon, "be it known to you, I care not for those over-sea refinements, without which I can well enough take my pleasure in the woods. I can wind my horn, I can cheer my dogs on the prey, and I can flay and quarter the animal when it is brought down, without using the jargon of the fabulous Sir Tristrem."

"The French," said the Templar, raising his voice with the presumptuous and authoritative tone which he



used upon all occasions, “is not only the natural language of the chase, but that of love and of war, in which ladies should be won and enemies defied.”

“Pledge me in a cup of wine, Sir Templar,” said Cedric, “and fill another to the Abbot, while I look back some thirty years to tell you another tale. As Cedric the Saxon then was, his plain English tale needed no garnish from French troubadours when it was told in the ear of beauty; and the field of Northallerton, upon the day of the Holy Standard, could tell whether the Saxon war-cry was not heard as far within the ranks of the Scottish host as the war-cry of the boldest Norman baron. To the memory of the brave who fought there!—Pledge me, my guests.” He drank deep, and went on with increasing warmth: “Aye, that was a day of cleaving of shields, when a hundred banners were bent forward over the heads of the valiant, and blood flowed round like water, and death was held better than flight. A Saxon bard had called it a feast of the swords—a gathering of the eagles to the prey—the clashing of bills upon shield and helmet, the shouting of battle more joyful than the clamor of a bridal. But our bards are no more,” he said; “our deeds are lost in those of another race; our language—our very name—is hastening to decay, and none mourns for it save one solitary old man.—Cup-bearer! knave, fill the goblets. To the strong in arms, Sir Templar, be their race or language what it will, who now bear them best in Palestine among the champions of the Cross!”

“It becomes not one wearing this badge to answer,” said Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert; “yet to whom, besides the sworn champions of the Holy Sepulcher, can the palm be assigned among the champions of the Cross?”



“ To the Knights Hospitalers,” said the Abbot; “ I have a brother of their order.”

“ I impeach not their fame,” said the Templar; “ nevertheless —”

“ I think, friend Cedric,” said Wamba, interfering, “ that had Richard of the Lion’s Heart been wise enough to take a fool’s advice, he might have stayed at home with his merry Englishmen, and left the recovery of Jerusalem to those same knights who had most to do with the loss of it.”

“ Were there, then, none in the English army,” said the Lady Rowena, “ whose names are worthy to be mentioned with the Knights of the Temple and of St. John? ”

“ Forgive me, lady,” replied De Bois-Guilbert; “ the English monarch did indeed bring to Palestine a host of gallant warriors, second only to those whose breasts have been the unceasing bulwark of that blessed land.”

“ Second to NONE,” said the Pilgrim, who had stood near enough to hear, and had listened to this conversation with marked impatience. All turned towards the spot from whence this unexpected asseveration was heard. “ I say,” repeated the Pilgrim in a firm and strong voice, “ that the English chivalry was second to NONE who ever drew sword in defense of the Holy Land. I say besides, for I saw it, that King Richard himself, and five of his knights, held a tournament after the taking of St. John-de-Acre, as challengers against all comers. I say that, on that day, each knight ran three courses, and cast to the ground three antagonists. I add, that seven of these assailants were Knights of the Temple; and Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert well knows the truth of what I tell you.”

It is impossible for language to describe the bitter



scowl of rage which rendered yet darker the swarthy countenance of the Templar. Cedric, whose feelings were all of a right onward and simple kind, omitted, in the joyous glee with which he heard of the glory of his countrymen, to remark the angry confusion of his guest. “I would give thee this golden bracelet, Pilgrim,” he said, “couldst thou tell me the names of those knights who upheld so gallantly the renown of merry England.”

“That will I do blithely,” replied the Pilgrim, “and without guerdon. The first in honor as in arms, in renown as in place, was the brave Richard, King of England.”

“I forgive him,” said Cedric — “I forgive him his descent from the tyrant Duke William.”

“The Earl of Leicester was the second,” continued the Pilgrim. “Sir Thomas Multon of Gilsland was the third.”

“Of Saxon descent, he at least,” said Cedric, with exultation.

“Sir Foulk Doilly the fourth,” proceeded the Pilgrim.

“Saxon also, at least by the mother’s side,” continued Cedric, who listened with the utmost eagerness, and forgot, in part at least, his hatred to the Normans in the common triumph of the King of England and his islanders. “And who was the fifth?” he demanded.

“The fifth was Sir Edwin Turneham.”

“Genuine Saxon, by the soul of Hengist!” shouted Cedric. “And the sixth?” he continued with eagerness — “how name you the sixth?”

“The sixth,” said the Palmer, after a pause, in which he seemed to recollect himself, “was a young knight of lesser renown and lower rank, assumed into that honorable company less to aid their enterprise than to make up their number; his name dwells not in my memory.”



“ Sir Palmer,” said Brian de Bois-Guilbert, scornfully, “ this assumed forgetfulness, after so much has been remembered, comes too late to serve your purpose. I will myself tell the name of the knight before whose lance fortune and my horse’s fault occasioned my falling — it was the Knight of Ivanhoe; nor was there one of the six that, for his years, had more renown in arms.— Yet this will I say, and loudly — that were he in England, and durst repeat, in this week’s tournament, the challenge of St. John-de-Acre, I, mounted and armed as I now am, would give him every advantage of weapons, and abide the result.”

“ Your challenge would be soon answered,” replied the Palmer, “ were your antagonist near you. As the matter is, disturb not the peaceful hall with vaunts of the issue of a conflict which you well know cannot take place. If Ivanhoe ever returns from Palestine, I will be his surety that he meets you.”

“ A goodly security!” said the Knight Templar; “ and what do you proffer as a pledge?”

“ This reliquary,” said the Palmer, taking a small ivory box from his bosom, and crossing himself, “ containing a portion of the true cross, brought from the Monastery of Mount Carmel.”

The Prior of Jorvaulx crossed himself and repeated a pater noster, in which all devoutly joined, excepting the Jew, the Mahomedans, and the Templar; the latter of whom, without vailing his bonnet or testifying any reverence for the alleged sanctity of the relic, took from his neck a gold chain, which he flung on the board, saying, “ Let Prior Aymer hold my pledge and that of this nameless vagrant, in token that, when the Knight of Ivanhoe comes within the four seas of Britain, he underlies the challenge of Brian de Bois-Guilbert, which, if he answers



not, I will proclaim him as a coward on the walls of every Temple Court in Europe.”

“It will not need,” said the Lady Rowena, breaking silence: “my voice shall be heard, if no other in this hall is raised, in behalf of the absent Ivanhoe. I affirm he will meet fairly every honorable challenge. Could my weak warrant add security to the inestimable pledge of this holy pilgrim, I would pledge name and fame that Ivanhoe gives this proud knight the meeting he desires.”

A crowd of conflicting emotions seemed to have occupied Cedric and kept him silent during this discussion. Gratified pride, resentment, embarrassment, chased each other over his broad and open brow, like the shadow of clouds drifting over a harvest-field; while his attendants, on whom the name of the sixth knight seemed to produce an effect almost electrical, hung in suspense upon their master’s looks. But when Rowena spoke, the sound of her voice seemed to startle him from his silence.

“Lady,” said Cedric, “this beseems not; were further pledge necessary, I myself, offended, and justly offended, as I am, would yet gauge my honor for the honor of Ivanhoe. But the wager of battle is complete, even according to the fantastic fashions of Norman chivalry. — Is it not, Father Aymer?”

“It is,” replied the Prior; “and the blessed relic and rich chain will I bestow safely in the treasury of our convent, until the decision of this warlike challenge.”

Having thus spoken, he crossed himself again and again, and delivered the reliquary to Brother Ambrose, his attendant monk, while he himself swept up with less ceremony, but perhaps with no less internal satisfaction, the golden chain, and bestowed it in a pouch lined with perfumed leather, which opened under his arm. “And now, Sir Cedric,” he said, “my ears are chiming vespers



with the strength of your good wine,— permit us another pledge to the welfare of the Lady Rowena, and indulge us with liberty to pass to our repose.”

The grace-cup was accordingly served round, and the guests, after making deep obeisance to their landlord and to the Lady Rowena, arose and mingled in the hall, while the heads of the family, by separate doors, retired with their attendants.

“ Unbelieving dog,” said the Templar to Isaac the Jew, as he passed him in the throng, “ dost thou bend thy course to the tournament? ”

“ I do so propose,” replied Isaac, bowing in all humility, “ if it please your reverend valor.”

“ Aye,” said the Knight, “ to gnaw the bowels of our nobles with usury, and to gull women and boys with gauds and toys — I warrant thee store of shekels in thy Jewish scrip.”

“ Not a shekel, not a silver penny, not a halfling,— so help me the God of Abraham! ” said the Jew, clasping his hands. “ I go but to seek the assistance of some brethren of my tribe to aid me to pay the fine which the Exchequer of the Jews have imposed upon me, Father Jacob be my speed! I am an impoverished wretch — the very gaberdine I wear is borrowed from Reuben of Tadcaster.”

The Templar smiled sourly as he replied, “ Beshrew thee for a false-hearted liar! ” and passing onward, as if disdaining farther conference, he communed with his Moslem slaves in a language unknown to the bystanders.

The Templar and Prior were shortly after marshalled to their sleeping apartments by the steward and the cup-bearer, each attended by two torch-bearers and two servants carrying refreshments, while servants of inferior condition indicated to their retinue and to the other guests their respective places of repose.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE PALMER AIDS THE JEW'S ESCAPE

As the Palmer, lighted by a domestic with a torch, passed through the intricate combination of apartments of this large and irregular mansion, the cupbearer, coming behind him, whispered in his ear, that if he had no objection to a cup of good mead in his apartment, there were many domestics in that family who would gladly hear the news he had brought from the Holy Land, and particularly that which concerned the Knight of Ivanhoe. Wamba presently appeared to urge the same request, observing that a cup after midnight was worth three after curfew. Without disputing a maxim urged by such grave authority, the Palmer thanked them for their courtesy, but observed that he had included in his religious vow an obligation never to speak in the kitchen on matters which were prohibited in the hall.

The cupbearer shrugged up his shoulders in displeasure. "I thought to have lodged him in the upper chamber," said he; "but since he is so unsocial to Christians, e'en let him take the next stall to Isaac the Jew's.—Anwold," said he to the torch-bearer, "carry the Pilgrim to the southern cell.—I give you good night," he added, "Sir Palmer, with small thanks for short courtesy."

"Good night, and Our Lady's benison!" said the Palmer, with composure; and his guide moved forward.

In a small ante-chamber, into which several doors



opened, and which was lighted by a small iron lamp, they met a second interruption, from the waiting-maid of Rowena, who, saying in a tone of authority that her mistress desired to speak with the Palmer, took the torch from the hand of Anwold, and, bidding him await her return, made a sign to the Palmer to follow.

A short passage led him to the apartment of the Lady Rowena, the rude magnificence of which corresponded to the respect which was paid to her by the lord of the mansion. The Lady Rowena, with three of her attendants standing at her back, and arranging her hair ere she lay down to rest, was seated in a sort of throne, and looked as if born to exact general homage. The Pilgrim acknowledged her claim to it by a low genuflection.

“ Rise, Palmer,” said she, graciously. “ The defender of the absent has a right to favorable reception from all who value truth and honor manhood.” She then said to her train, “ Retire, excepting only Elgitha; I would speak with this holy Pilgrim.”

“ Pilgrim,” said the lady, after a moment’s pause, during which she seemed uncertain how to address him, “ you this night mentioned a name — I mean,” she said, with a degree of effort, “ the name of Ivanhoe — in the halls where by nature and kindred it should have sounded most acceptably; and yet, such is the perverse course of fate, that of many whose hearts must have throbbed at the sound, I only dare ask you where, and in what condition, you left him of whom you spoke? — We heard that, having remained in Palestine, on account of his impaired health, after the departure of the English army, he had experienced the persecution of the French faction, to whom the Templars are known to be attached.”

“ I know little of the Knight of Ivanhoe,” answered the Palmer, with a troubled voice. “ I would I knew



him better, since you, lady, are interested in his fate. He hath, I believe, surmounted the persecution of his enemies in Palestine, and is on the eve of returning to England, where you, lady, must know better than I what is his chance of happiness."

The Lady Rowena sighed deeply, and asked more particularly when the Knight of Ivanhoe might be expected in his native country, and whether he would not be exposed to great dangers by the road. On the first point, the Palmer professed ignorance; on the second, he said that the voyage might be safely made by the way of Venice and Genoa, and from thence through France to England. "Ivanhoe," he said, "was so well acquainted with the language and manners of the French, that there was no fear of his incurring any hazard during that part of his travels."

"Would to God," said the Lady Rowena, "he were here safely arrived, and able to bear arms in the approaching tourney, in which the chivalry of this land are expected to display their address and valor. Should Athelstane of Coningsburgh obtain the prize, Ivanhoe is like to hear evil tidings when he reaches England.—How looked he, stranger, when you last saw him? Had disease laid her hand heavy upon his strength and comeliness?"

"He was darker," said the Palmer, "and thinner than when he came from Cyprus in the train of Cœur-de-Lion, and care seemed to sit heavy on his brow; but I approached not his presence, because he is unknown to me."

"He will," said the lady, "I fear, find little in his native land to clear those clouds from his countenance. Thanks, good Pilgrim, for your information concerning the companion of my childhood.—Maidens," she said,



“ draw near — offer the sleeping-cup to this holy man, whom I will no longer detain from repose.”

One of the maidens presented a silver cup containing a rich mixture of wine and spice, which Rowena barely put to her lips. It was then offered to the Palmer, who, after a low obeisance, tasted a few drops.

“ Accept this alms, friend,” continued the lady, offering a piece of gold, “ in acknowledgment of thy painful travail, and of the shrines thou hast visited.”

The Palmer received the boon with another low reverence, and followed Elgitha out of the apartment.

In the ante-room he found his attendant Anwold, who, taking the torch from the hand of the waiting-maid, conducted him with more haste than ceremony to an exterior and ignoble part of the building, where a number of small apartments, or rather cells, served for sleeping-places to the lower order of domestics, and to strangers of mean degree.

“ In which of these sleeps the Jew? ” said the Pilgrim.

“ The unbelieving dog,” answered Anwold, “ kennels in the cell next your holiness.—St. Dunstan, how it must be scraped and cleansed ere it be again fit for a Christian! ”

“ And where sleeps Gurth, the swineherd? ”

“ Gurth,” replied the bondsman, “ sleeps in the cell on your right, as the Jew in that to your left; you serve to keep the child of circumcision separate from the abomination of his tribe. You might have occupied a more honorable place had you accepted Oswald’s invitation.”

“ It is as well as it is,” said the Palmer; “ the company even of a Jew can hardly spread contamination through an oaken partition.”

So saying, he entered the cabin allotted to him, and, taking the torch from the domestic’s hand, thanked him



and wished him good night. Having shut the door of his cell, he extinguished his torch, threw himself, without taking off any part of his clothes, on the rude couch, and slept, or at least retained his recumbent posture, till the earliest sunbeams found their way through the little grated window, which served at once to admit both air and light to his uncomfortable cell. He then started up, and, after repeating his matins and adjusting his dress, he left it, and entered that of Isaac the Jew, lifting the latch as gently as he could.

The inmate was lying in troubled slumber upon a couch similar to that on which the Palmer himself had passed the night. His hands and arms moved convulsively, as if struggling with the nightmare; and besides several ejaculations in Hebrew, the following were distinctly heard in the Norman-English, or mixed language of the country: "For the sake of the God of Abraham, spare an unhappy old man! I am poor, I am penniless; should your irons wrench my limbs asunder, I could not gratify you!"

The Palmer awaited not the end of the Jew's vision, but stirred him with his pilgrim's staff. The touch probably associated, as is usual, with some of the apprehensions excited by his dream; for the old man started up, and fixed upon the Palmer his keen black eyes, expressive of wild surprise and of bodily apprehension.

"Fear nothing from me, Isaac," said the Palmer, "I come as your friend."

"The God of Israel requite you," said the Jew, greatly relieved; "I dreamed — But Father Abraham be praised, it was but a dream!" Then, collecting himself, he added in his usual tone, "And what may it be your pleasure to want at so early an hour with the poor Jew?"



“ It is to tell you,” said the Palmer, “ that if you leave not this mansion instantly, and travel not with some haste, your journey may prove a dangerous one. When the Templar crossed the hall yesternight he spoke to his Mussulman slaves in the Saracen language, which I well understand, and charged them to watch this morning the journey of the Jew, to seize upon him when at a convenient distance from the mansion, and to conduct him to the castle of Philip de Malvoisin or to that of Reginald Front-de-Bœuf.”

The extremity of terror which seized upon the Jew at this information seemed at once to overpower his whole faculties. His arms fell down to his sides, and he sunk at the foot of the Palmer like a man borne down on all sides by the pressure of some invisible force.

“ Holy God of Abraham! ” was his first exclamation, “ O holy Moses! O blessed Aaron! the dream is not dreamed for nought, and the vision cometh not in vain! I feel their irons already tear my sinews! ”

“ Stand up, Isaac, and harken to me,” said the Palmer, who viewed the extremity of his distress with a compassion in which contempt was largely mingled; “ stand up, I say, and I will point out to you the means of escape. Leave this mansion instantly, while its inmates sleep sound after last night’s revel. I will guide you by the secret paths of the forest, known as well to me as to any forester that ranges it, and I will not leave you till you are under safe conduct of some chief or baron going to the tournament, whose good-will you have probably the means of securing.”

“ *I* possess the means of securing good-will! Alas! there is but one road to the favor of a Christian, and how can the poor Jew find it, whom extortions have already reduced to the misery of Lazarus? ” Then, as if



suspicion had overpowered his other feelings, Isaac suddenly exclaimed, "For the love of God, young man, betray me not — for the sake of the Great Father who made us all, Jew as well as Gentile, Israelite and Ishmaelite, do me no treason!" As he spoke these last words, he raised himself and grasped the Palmer's mantle with a look of the most earnest entreaty. The Pilgrim extricated himself, as if there were contamination in the touch.

"Wert thou loaded with all the wealth of thy tribe," he said, "what interest have I to injure thee? — In this dress I am vowed to poverty, nor do I change it for aught save a horse and a coat of mail. Yet think not that I care for thy company, or propose myself advantage by it; remain here if thou wilt — Cedric the Saxon may protect thee."

"Alas!" said the Jew, "he will not let me travel in his train — Saxon or Norman will be equally ashamed of the poor Israelite; and to travel by myself through the domains of Philip de Malvoisin and Reginald Front-de-Bœuf — Good youth, I will go with you! Let us haste — let us gird up our loins — let us flee! — Here is thy staff, why wilt thou tarry?"

"I tarry not," said the Pilgrim, giving way to the urgency of his companion; "but I must secure the means of leaving this place; follow me."

He led the way to the adjoining cell, which, as the reader is apprised, was occupied by Gurth, the swineherd. "Arise, Gurth," said the Pilgrim, "arise quickly. Undo the postern gate, and let out the Jew and me."

Gurth, whose occupation, though now held so mean, gave him much consequence in Saxon England, was offended at the familiar and commanding tone assumed by the Palmer. "The Jew leaving Rotherwood," said



he, raising himself on his elbow and looking superciliously at him, without quitting his pallet, “and traveling in company with the Palmer to boot? Both Jew and Gentile must be content to abide the opening of the great gate — we suffer no visitors to depart by stealth at these unseasonable hours.”

“Nevertheless,” said the Pilgrim, in a commanding tone, “you will not, I think, refuse me that favor.”

So saying, he stooped over the bed of the recumbent swineherd, and whispered something in his ear in Saxon. Gurth started up as if electrified. The Pilgrim, raising his finger in an attitude as if to express caution, added, “Gurth, beware; thou art wont to be prudent. I say, undo the postern; thou shalt know more anon.”

With hasty alacrity Gurth obeyed him, while Wamba and the Jew followed, both wondering at the sudden change in the swineherd’s demeanor.

“My mule, my mule!” said the Jew, as soon as they stood without the postern.

“Fetch him his mule,” said the Pilgrim; “and, hearest thou, let me have another that I may bear him company till he is beyond these parts. I will return it safely to some of Cedric’s train at Ashby. And do thou —” he whispered the rest in Gurth’s ear.

“Willingly, most willingly shall it be done,” said Gurth, and instantly departed to execute the commission.

“I wish I knew,” said Wamba, when his comrade’s back was turned, “what you Palmers learn in the Holy Land.”

“To say our orisons, fool,” answered the Pilgrim, “to repent our sins, and to mortify ourselves with fastings, vigils, and long prayers.”

“Something more potent than that,” answered the Jester; “for when would repentence or prayer make



Gurth do a courtesy, or fasting or vigil persuade him to lend you a mule? I trow you might as well have told his favorite black boar of thy vigils and penance, and wouldst have gotten as civil an answer."

At this moment Gurth appeared on the opposite side of the moat with the mules. The travelers crossed the ditch upon a drawbridge of only two planks' breadth, the narrowness of which was matched with the straightness of the postern, and with a little wicket in the exterior palisade, which gave access to the forest. No sooner had they reached the mules than the Jew, with hasty and trembling hands, secured behind the saddle a small bag of blue buckram, which he took from under his cloak, containing, as he muttered, "a change of raiment — only a change of raiment." Then, getting upon the animal with more alacrity and haste than could have been anticipated from his years, he lost no time in so disposing of the skirts of his gaberdine as to conceal completely from observation the burden which he had thus deposited behind.

The Pilgrim mounted with more deliberation, reaching, as he departed, his hand to Gurth, who kissed it with the utmost possible veneration. The swineherd stood gazing after the travelers until they were lost under the boughs of the forest path.

When the travelers had pushed on at a rapid rate through many devious paths, the Palmer at length broke silence.

"That large decayed oak," he said, "marks the boundaries over which Front-de-Bœuf claims authority; we are long since far from those of Malvoisin. There is now no fear of pursuit."

"May the wheels of their chariots be taken off," said the Jew, "like those of the host of Pharaoh, that they



may drive heavily! — But leave me not, good Pilgrim.— Think of that fierce and savage Templar, with his Saracen slaves; they will regard neither territory, nor manor, nor lordship.”

“ Our road,” said the Palmer, “ should here separate; for it beseems not men of my character and thine to travel together longer than needs must be. Besides, what succor couldst thou have from me, a peaceful Pilgrim, against two armed heathens? ”

“ O good youth,” answered the Jew, “ thou canst defend me, and I know thou wouldst. Poor as I am, I will requite it — not with money, for money, so help me my Father Abraham! I have none; but — ”

“ Money and recompense,” said the Palmer, interrupting him, “ I require not of thee. Guide thee I can, and even in some sort defend thee; since to protect a Jew against a Saracen can scarce be accounted unworthy of a Christian. We are now not far from the town of Sheffield, where thou mayest easily find many of thy tribe with whom to take refuge.”

“ The blessing of Jacob be upon thee, good youth! ” said the Jew; “ in Sheffield I can harbor with my kinsman Zareth, and find some means of traveling forth with safety.”

“ Be it so,” said the Palmer; “ at Sheffield then we part, and half an hour’s riding will bring us in sight of that town.”

The half hour was spent in perfect silence on both parts; the Pilgrim perhaps disdaining to address the Jew, except in case of absolute necessity, and the Jew not presuming to force a conversation with a person whose journey to the Holy Sepulcher gave a sort of sanctity to his character. They paused on the top of a gently rising bank, and the Pilgrim, pointing to the town of



Sheffield, which lay beneath them, repeated the words, "Here, then, we part."

"Not till you have had the poor Jew's thanks," said Isaac; "for I presume not to ask you to go with me to my kinsman Zareth's, who might aid me with some means of repaying your good offices."

"I have already said," answered the Pilgrim, "that I desire no recompense. If, among the huge list of thy debtors, thou wilt, for my sake, spare the gyves and the dungeon to some unhappy Christian who stands in thy danger, I shall hold this morning's service to thee well bestowed."

"Stay, stay," said the Jew, laying hold of his garment; "something would I do more than this — something for thyself. God knows the Jew is poor — yes, Isaac is the beggar of his tribe — but forgive me should I guess what thou most lackest at this moment. Thy wish even now is for a horse and armor."

The Palmer started, and turned suddenly towards the Jew. "What fiend prompted that guess?" said he, hastily.

"No matter," said the Jew, smiling, "so that it be a true one; and as I can guess thy want, so I can supply it. There dropped words from you last night and this morning that, like sparks from flint, showed the metal within; and in the bosom of that Palmer's gown is hidden a knight's chain and spurs of gold. They glanced as you stooped over my bed in the morning."

The Pilgrim could not forbear smiling. "Were thy garments searched by as curious an eye, Isaac," said he, "what discoveries might not be made?"

"No more of that," said the Jew, changing color; and drawing forth his writing materials in haste, as if to stop the conversation, he began to write upon a piece of paper



which he supported on the top of his yellow cap, without dismounting from his mule. When he had finished, he delivered the scroll, which was in the Hebrew character, to the Pilgrim, saying, “ In the town of Leicester all men know the rich Jew, Kirjath Jairam of Lombardy; give him this scroll. He hath on sale six Milan harnesses, the worst would suit a crowned head — ten goodly steeds, the worst might mount a king, were he to do battle for his throne. Of these he will give thee thy choice, with everything else that can furnish thee forth for the tournament; when it is over, thou wilt return them safely — unless thou shouldst have wherewith to pay their value to the owner.”

“ But Isaac,” said the Pilgrim, smiling, “ dost thou know that in these sports the arms and steed of the knight who is unhorsed are forfeit to his victor? Now I may be unfortunate, and so lose what I cannot replace or repay.”

The Jew looked somewhat astounded at this possibility; but, collecting his courage, he replied hastily, “ No — no — no. It is impossible — I will not think so. The blessing of Our Father will be upon thee. Thy lance will be powerful as the rod of Moses. Fare thee well! — Yet, hark thee, good youth,” said he, turning about, “ thrust thyself not too forward into this vain hurly-burly — I speak not for endangering the steed and coat of armor, but for the sake of thine own life and limbs.”

“ Many thanks for thy caution,” said the Palmer, again smiling; “ I will use thy courtesy frankly, and it will go hard with me but I will requite it.”

They parted, and took different roads for the town of Sheffield.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE LISTS AT ASHBY.

THE Passage of Arms, as it was called, which was to take place at Ashby, had attracted universal attention, and an immense confluence of persons of all ranks hastened upon the appointed morning to the place of combat.

The scene was singularly romantic. The ground, as if fashioned on purpose for the martial display which was intended, sloped gradually down on all sides to a level bottom, which was inclosed for the lists with strong palisades, forming a space a quarter of a mile in length, and about half as broad. On a platform beyond the southern entrance were pitched five magnificent pavilions, adorned with pennons of russet and black, the chosen colors of the five knights challengers. Before each pavilion was suspended the shield of the knight by whom it was occupied, and beside it stood his squire, quaintly disguised in some fantastic dress. The central pavilion, as the place of honor, had been assigned to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, whose renown in all games of chivalry had occasioned him to be eagerly received into the company of the challengers, and even adopted as their chief and leader. On one side of his tent were pitched those of Reginald Front-de-Bœuf and Philip de Malvoisin, and on the other was the pavilion of Hugh de Grantmesnil, a noble baron in the vicinity. Ralph de Vipont, a knight of St. John of Jerusalem, occupied the fifth



pavilion. From the entrance into the lists a gently sloping passage, ten yards in breadth, led up to the platform on which the tents were pitched.

The northern access to the lists terminated in a similar entrance of thirty feet in breadth, at the extremity of which was a large inclosed space for such knights as might be disposed to enter the lists with the challengers.

The exterior of the lists was in part occupied by temporary galleries, spread with tapestry and carpets, and accommodated with cushions for the convenience of those ladies and nobles who were expected to attend the tournament. A narrow space betwixt these galleries and the lists gave accommodation for yeomanry and spectators of a better degree than the mere vulgar. The promiscuous multitude arranged themselves upon large banks of turf prepared for the purpose.

One gallery in the very center of the eastern side of the lists, and consequently exactly opposite the spot where the shock of combat was to take place, was raised higher than the others, more richly decorated, and graced by a sort of throne and canopy, on which the royal arms were emblazoned. Squires, pages, and yeomen in rich liveries waited around this place of honor, which was designed for Prince John and his attendants. Opposite this gallery was another, elevated to the same height, on the western side of the lists, and more gayly, if less sumptuously, decorated than that destined for the Prince himself. A train of pages and young maidens, the most beautiful who could be selected, gayly dressed in fancy habits of green and pink, surrounded a throne decorated in the same colors. Among pennons and flags bearing wounded hearts, burning hearts, bleeding hearts, and bows and quivers, a blazoned inscription informed the spectators that this seat of honor was designed for



The Queen of Beauty and of Love. But who was to represent the Queen of Beauty and of Love on the present occasion, no one was prepared to guess.

Meanwhile, spectators of every description thronged forward to occupy their respective stations. Gradually the galleries became filled with knights and nobles, in their robes of peace, whose long and rich-tinted mantles contrasted with the gayer and more splendid habits of the ladies. The lower and interior space was soon filled by substantial yeomen and burghers, and such of the lesser gentry as, from modesty, poverty, or dubious title, durst not assume any higher place. It was of course amongst these that the most frequent disputes for precedence occurred.

“Dog of an unbeliever,” said an old man, whose threadbare tunic bore witness to his poverty, as his sword and dagger and golden chain intimated his pretensions to rank — “whelp of a she-wolf! darest thou press upon a Christian, and a Norman gentleman of the blood of Montdidier?”

This rough expostulation was addressed to no other than our acquaintance Isaac, who, richly and even magnificently dressed, was endeavoring to make place in the foremost row beneath the gallery for his daughter, the beautiful Rebecca, who had joined him at Ashby, and who was now hanging on her father's arm, not a little terrified by the popular displeasure which seemed generally excited by her parent's presumption. But Isaac, though sufficiently timid on other occasions, knew well that at present he had nothing to fear. It was not in places of general resort, or where their equals were assembled, that any avaricious or malevolent noble durst offer him injury.

The complaints of the old man, however, excited the



indignation of the bystanders. One of these, a stout, well-set yeoman, arrayed in Lincoln green, having twelve arrows stuck in his belt, with a baldric and badge of silver, and a bow of six feet length in his hand, turned short round, and advised the Jew to remember that all the wealth he had acquired by sucking the blood of his miserable victims had but swelled him like a bloated spider, which might be overlooked while it kept in a corner, but would be crushed if it ventured into the light.

This intimation, delivered in Norman-English with a firm voice and a stern aspect, made the Jew shrink back; and he would have probably withdrawn himself altogether from a vicinity so dangerous, had not the attention of every one been called to the sudden entrance of Prince John, who at that moment entered the lists, attended by a gay and numerous train.

In his joyous caracole round the lists, the attention of the Prince was called by the commotion, not yet subsided, which had attended the ambitious movement of Isaac towards the higher places of the assembly. The quick eye of Prince John instantly recognized the Jew, but was much more agreeably attracted by the beautiful daughter of Zion, who, terrified by the tumult, clung close to the arm of her aged father.

“By the bald scalp of Abraham,” said Prince John, “yonder Jewess must be the very model of that perfection whose charms drove frantic the wisest king that ever lived! And there is my Mammon of unrighteousness too—the Marquis of Marks, the Baron of Byzants, contesting for place with penniless dogs, whose threadbare cloaks have not a single cross in their pouches to keep the devil from dancing there. By the body of St. Mark, my prince of supplies, with his lovely Jewess, shall



have a place in the gallery! — What is she, Isaac? Thy wife or thy daughter? ”

“ My daughter Rebecca, so please your Grace,” answered Isaac, with a low bow.

“ Daughter or wife,” said John, “ she should be preferred according to her beauty and thy merits.— Who sits above there? ” he continued, bending his eye on the gallery. “ Saxon churls, lolling at their lazy length! Out upon them! let them sit close, and make room for my prince of usurers and his lovely daughter. I’ll make the hinds know they must share the high places of the synagogue with those to whom the synagogue properly belongs.”

Those who occupied the gallery, to whom this injurious and unpolite speech was addressed, were the family of Cedric the Saxon, with that of his ally and kinsman, Athelstane of Coningsburgh, a personage who, on account of his descent from the last Saxon monarchs of England, was held in the highest respect by all the Saxon natives of the north of England. Athelstane, utterly confounded at an order which the manners and feelings of the times rendered so injuriously insulting, without stirring or making any motion whatever of obedience, opened his large gray eyes and stared at the Prince with an astonishment which had in it something extremely ludicrous. But the impatient John regarded it in no such light.

“ The Saxon porker,” he said, “ is either asleep or minds me not — prick him with your lance, De Bracy,” speaking to a knight who rode near him, the leader of a band of free companions, or mercenaries belonging to no particular nation, but attached for the time to any prince by whom they were paid. There was a murmur even among the attendants of Prince John; but De Bracy,



whose profession freed him from all scruples, extended his long lance over the space which separated the gallery from the lists, and would have executed the commands of the Prince before Athelstane the Unready had recovered presence of mind sufficient even to draw back his person from the weapon, had not Cedric, as prompt as his companion was tardy, unsheathed, with the speed of lightning, the short sword which he wore, and at a single blow severed the point of the lance from the handle. The blood rushed into the countenance of Prince John. He was about to utter some violent threat when he was diverted from his purpose, partly by his own attendants, who gathered around him conjuring him to be patient, partly by a general exclamation of the crowd, uttered in loud applause of the spirited conduct of Cedric. The Prince rolled his eyes in indignation, as if to collect some safe and easy victim; and chancing to encounter the firm glance of the same archer whom we have already noticed, and who seemed to persist in his gesture of applause, in spite of the frowning aspect which the Prince bent upon him, he demanded his reason for clamoring thus.

“ I always add my hollo,” said the yeoman, “ when I see a good shot or a gallant blow.”

“ Sayest thou? ” answered the Prince; “ then thou canst hit the white thyself, I’ll warrant.”

“ A woodsman’s mark, and at woodsman’s distance, I can hit,” answered the yeoman.

“ And Wat Tyrrel’s mark, at a hundred yards,” said a voice from behind, but by whom uttered could not be discerned.

This allusion to the fate of William Rufus, his grandfather, at once incensed and alarmed Prince John. He satisfied himself, however, with commanding the men-at-



arms who surrounded the lists to keep an eye on the braggart, pointing to the yeoman.

“By St. Grizzel,” he added, “we will try his own skill, who is so ready to give his voice to the feats of others!”

“I shall not fly the trial,” said the yeoman, with the composure which marked his whole deportment.

“Meanwhile, stand up, ye Saxon churls,” said the fiery Prince; “for, by the light of Heaven, since I have said it, the Jew shall have his seat amongst ye!”

“By no means, an it please your Grace! — it is not fit for such as we to sit with the rulers of the land,” said the Jew, whose ambition for precedence, though it had led him to dispute place with the extenuated and impoverished descendant of the line of Montdidier, by no means stimulated him to an intrusion upon the privileges of the wealthy Saxons.

“Up, infidel dog, when I command you,” said Prince John, “or I will have thy swarthy hide stripped off and tanned for horse-furniture!”

Thus urged, the Jew began to ascend the steep and narrow steps which led up to the gallery.

“Let me see,” said the Prince, “who dare stop him!” fixing his eye on Cedric, whose attitude intimated his intention to hurl the Jew down headlong.

The catastrophe was prevented by the clown Wamba, who, springing betwixt his master and Isaac, and exclaiming in answer to the Prince’s defiance, “Marry, that will I!” opposed to the beard of the Jew a shield of brawn, which he plucked from beneath his cloak, and with which, doubtless, he had furnished himself lest the tournament should prove longer than his appetite could endure abstinence. Finding the abomination of his tribe opposed to his very nose, while the Jester at



the same time flourished his wooden sword above his head, the Jew recoiled, missed his footing, and rolled down the steps — an excellent jest to the spectators, who set up a loud laughter, in which Prince John and his attendants heartily joined.

“Deal me the prize, cousin Prince,” said Wamba. “I have vanquished my foe in fair fight with sword and shield,” he added, brandishing the brawn in one hand and the wooden sword in the other.

“Who and what art thou, noble champion?” said Prince John, still laughing.

“A fool by right of descent,” answered the Jester; “I am Wamba, the son of Witless, who was the son of Weatherbrain, who was the son of an alderman.”

“Make room for the Jew in front of the lower ring,” said Prince John, not unwilling, perhaps, to seize an apology to desist from his original purpose; “to place the vanquished beside the victor were false heraldry.”

“Knave upon fool were worse,” answered the Jester, “and Jew upon bacon worst of all.”

“Many thanks! good fellow,” cried Prince John, “thou pleasest me.—Here, Isaac, lend me a handful of byzants.”

As the Jew, stunned by the request, afraid to refuse and unwilling to comply, fumbled in the furred bag which hung by his girdle, and was perhaps endeavoring to ascertain how few coins might pass for a handful, the Prince stooped from his jennet and settled Isaac’s doubts by snatching the pouch itself from his side. Flinging to Wamba a couple of the gold pieces which it contained, he pursued his career round the lists, leaving the Jew to the derision of those around him, and himself receiving as much applause from the spectators as if he had done some honest and honorable action.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FIRST DAY OF THE TOURNAMENT

IN the midst of Prince John's cavalcade, he suddenly stopped, and, appealing to the Prior of Jorvaulx, declared the principal business of the day had been forgotten.

"By my halidom," said he, "we have neglected, Sir Prior, to name the fair Sovereign of Love and Beauty, by whose white hand the palm is to be distributed. For my part, I am liberal in my ideas, and I care not if I give my vote for the black-eyed Rebecca."

"Holy Virgin," answered the Prior, turning up his eyes in horror, "a Jewess!—We should deserve to be stoned out of the lists; and I am not yet old enough to be a martyr. Besides, I swear by my patron saint that she is far inferior to the lovely Saxon, Rowena."

"Saxon or Jew," answered the Prince, "Saxon or Jew, dog or hog, what matters it? I say, name Rebecca, were it only to mortify the Saxon churls."

A murmur arose even among his own immediate attendants.

"This passes a jest, my lord," said De Bracy; "no knight here will lay lance in rest if such an insult is attempted. Let the fair sovereign's throne remain unoccupied until the conqueror shall be named, and then let him choose the lady by whom it shall be filled. It will add another grace to his triumph, and teach fair



ladies to prize the love of valiant knights, who can exalt them to such distinction."

The Prince acquiesced, and, assuming his throne, gave signal to the heralds to proclaim the laws of the tournament, which were briefly as follows:

First, the five challengers were to undertake all comers.

Secondly, any knight proposing to combat might, if he pleased, select a special antagonist from among the challengers, by touching his shield. If he did so with the reverse of his lance, the trial of skill was made with what were called the arms of courtesy, that is, with lances at whose extremity a piece of round, flat board was fixed, so that no danger was encountered, save from the shock of the horses and riders. But if the shield was touched with the sharp end of the lance, the knights were to fight with sharp weapons, as in actual battle.

Thirdly, when the knights present had accomplished their vow, by each of them breaking five lances, the Prince was to declare the victor in the first day's tourney, who should receive as prize a war-horse of exquisite beauty and matchless strength; and in addition to this reward of valor, it was now declared, he should have the peculiar honor of naming the Queen of Love and Beauty, by whom the prize should be given on the ensuing day.

Fourthly, it was announced that, on the second day, there should be a general tournament, in which all the knights present, who were desirous to win praise, might take part; and being divided into two bands, of equal numbers, might fight it out manfully until the signal was given by Prince John to cease the combat. The elected Queen of Love and Beauty was then to crown the knight whom the Prince should adjudge to have borne himself best in this second day, with a coronet com-



posed of thin gold plate, cut into the shape of a laurel crown. On this second day the knightly games ceased. But on that which was to follow, feats of archery, of bull-baiting, and other popular amusements were to be practiced, for the more immediate amusement of the populace.

The heralds finished their proclamation with their usual cry of “*Largesse, largesse, gallant knights!*” and gold and silver pieces were showered on them from the galleries. The bounty of the spectators was acknowledged by the customary shouts of “*Love of ladies! Death of champions! Honor to the generous! Glory to the brave!*” To which the more humble spectators added their acclamations, and a numerous band of trumpeters the flourish of their martial instruments. When these sounds had ceased, the heralds withdrew from the lists in gay and glittering procession, and none remained within them save the marshals of the field, who, armed cap-à-pie, sat on horseback, motionless as statues, at the opposite ends of the lists.

Meantime, the enclosed space at the northern extremity of the lists, large as it was, was now completely crowded with knights desirous to prove their skill against the challengers. At length the barriers were opened, and five knights, chosen by lot, advanced slowly into the area, restraining their fiery steeds, and compelling them to move slowly, while, at the same time, they exhibited their paces, together with the grace and dexterity of the riders. As the procession entered the lists, the sound of a wild, barbaric music was heard from behind the tents of the challengers, where the performers were concealed. With the eyes of an immense concourse of spectators fixed upon them, the five knights advanced up the platform upon which the tents of the challengers



stood, and each touched slightly, and with the reverse of his lance, the shield of the antagonist to whom he wished to oppose himself.

The champions retreated to the extremity of the lists, where they remained drawn up in a line; while the challengers, sallying each from his pavilion, mounted their horses, and, headed by Brian de Bois-Guilbert, descended from the platform and opposed themselves individually to the knights who had touched their respective shields.

At the flourish of clarions and trumpets, they started out against each other at full gallop; and such was the superior dexterity or good fortune of the challengers, that those opposed to Bois-Guilbert, Malvoisin, and Front-de-Bœuf rolled on the ground. The antagonist of Grantmesnil, instead of bearing his lance-point fair against the crest or the shield of his enemy, swerved so much from the direct line as to break the weapon athwart the person of his opponent — a circumstance which was accounted more disgraceful than that of being actually unhorsed, because the latter might happen from accident, whereas the former evinced awkwardness and want of management of the weapon and the horse. The fifth knight alone maintained the honor of his party, and parted fairly with the Knight of St. John, both splintering their lances without advantage on either side.

The shouts of the multitude, together with the acclamations of the heralds and the clangor of the trumpets, announced the triumph of the victors and the defeat of the vanquished. The former retreated to their pavilions, and the latter, gathering themselves up as they could, withdrew from the lists in disgrace and dejection, to agree with their victors concerning the redemption of their arms and their horses, which, according to the laws of the tournament, they had forfeited. The fifth of their



number alone tarried in the lists long enough to be greeted by the applauses of the spectators, amongst whom he retreated, to the aggravation, doubtless, of his companions' mortification.

A second and a third party of knights took the field; and although they had various success, yet, upon the whole, the advantage decidedly remained with the challengers, not one of whom lost his seat or swerved from his charge — misfortunes which befell one or two of their antagonists in each encounter. The spirits, therefore, of those opposed to them seemed to be considerably damped by their continued success. Three knights only appeared on the fourth entry, who, avoiding the shields of Bois-Guilbert and Front-de-Bœuf, contented themselves with touching those of the three other knights, who had not altogether manifested the same strength and dexterity. This politic selection did not alter the fortune of the field: the challengers were still successful. One of their antagonists was overthrown; and both the others failed in the *attaint*, that is, in striking the helmet and shield of their antagonist firmly and strongly, with the lance held in a direct line, so that the weapon might break unless the champion was overthrown.

After this fourth encounter, there was a considerable pause; nor did it appear that any one was very desirous of renewing the contest. The spectators murmured among themselves; for, among the challengers, Malvoisin and Front-de-Bœuf were unpopular from their characters, and the others, except Grantmesnil, were disliked as strangers and foreigners. Prince John began to talk to his attendants about making ready the banquet, and the necessity of adjudging the prize to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, who had, with a single spear, overthrown two knights and foiled a third.



At length, as the Saracenic music of the challengers concluded one of those long and high flourishes with which they had broken the silence of the lists, it was answered by a solitary trumpet, which breathed a note of defiance from the northern extremity. All eyes were turned to see the new champion which these sounds announced, and no sooner were the barriers opened than he paced into the lists. As far as could be judged of a man sheathed in armor, the new adventurer did not greatly exceed the middle size, and seemed to be rather slender than strongly made. His suit of armor was formed of steel, richly inlaid with gold, and the device on his shield was a young oak tree pulled up by the roots, with the Spanish word *Desdichado*, signifying Disinherited. He was mounted on a gallant black horse, and as he passed through the lists he gracefully saluted the Prince and the ladies by lowering his lance. The dexterity with which he managed his steed, and something of youthful grace which he displayed in his manner, won him the favor of the multitude, which some of the lower classes expressed by calling out, "Touch Ralph de Vipont's shield — touch the Hospitaller's shield; he has the least sure seat, he is your cheapest bargain."

The champion, moving onward amid these well-meant hints, ascended the platform by the sloping alley which led to it from the lists, and to the astonishment of all present, riding straight up to the central pavilion, struck with the sharp end of his spear the shield of Brian de Bois-Guilbert until it rang again. All stood astonished at his presumption, but none more than the redoubted knight whom he had thus defied to mortal combat, and who, little expecting so rude a challenge, was standing carelessly at the door of the pavilion.

"Have you confessed yourself, brother," said the Tem-



plar, "and have you heard mass this morning, that you peril your life so frankly?"

"I am fitter to meet death than thou art," answered the Disinherited Knight; for by this name the stranger had recorded himself in the books of the tourney.

"Then take your place in the lists," said Bois-Guilbert, "and look your last upon the sun; for this night thou shalt sleep in paradise."

"Many thanks for thy courtesy," replied the Disinherited Knight, "and to requite it, I advise thee to take a fresh horse and a new lance, for by my honor you will need both."

Having expressed himself thus confidently, he reined his horse backward down the slope which he had ascended, and compelled him in the same manner to move backward through the lists, till he reached the northern extremity, where he remained stationary, in expectation of his antagonist. This feat of horsemanship again attracted the applause of the multitude.

However incensed at his adversary for the precautions which he recommended, Brian de Bois-Guilbert did not neglect his advice. He changed his horse for a proved and fresh one of great strength and spirit. He chose a new and tough spear, lest the wood of the former might have been strained in the previous encounters. Lastly, he laid aside his shield, which had received some little damage, and received another from his squires.

When the two champions stood opposed to each other at the two extremities of the lists, public expectation was strained to the highest pitch. Few augured the possibility that the encounter could terminate well for the Disinherited Knight; yet his courage and gallantry secured the general good wishes of the spectators.

The trumpets had no sooner given the signal, than the



champions vanished from their posts with the speed of lightning, and closed in the center of the lists with the shock of a thunderbolt. The lances burst into shivers up to the very grasp, and it seemed at the moment that both knights had fallen, for the shock had made each horse recoil backwards upon its haunches. The address of the riders recovered their steeds by use of the bridle and spur; and having glared on each other for an instant with eyes which seemed to flash fire through the bars of their visors, each made a demi-volte, and, retiring to the extremity of the lists, received a fresh lance from the attendants.

A loud shout from the spectators, waving of scarfs and handkerchiefs, and general acclamations, attested the interest taken by the spectators in this encounter — the most equal, as well as the best performed, which had graced the day. But no sooner had the knights resumed their station than the clamor of applause was hushed into a silence so deep and so dead that it seemed the multitude were afraid even to breathe.

A few minutes' pause having been allowed, that the combatants and their horses might recover breath, Prince John with his truncheon signed to the trumpets to sound the onset. The champions a second time sprung from their stations, and closed in the center of the lists, with the same speed, the same dexterity, the same violence, but not the same equal fortune as before.

In this second encounter, the Templar aimed at the center of his antagonist's shield, and struck it so fair and forcibly that his spear went to shivers, and the Disinherited Knight reeled in his saddle. On the other hand, that champion had, in the beginning of his career, directed the point of his lance towards Bois-Guilbert's shield, but, changing his aim almost in the moment of encounter, he



addressed it to the helmet, a mark more difficult to hit, but which, if attained, rendered the shock more irresistible. Fair and true he hit the Norman on the visor, where his lance's point kept hold of the bars. Yet, even at this disadvantage, the Templar sustained his high reputation; and had not the girths of his saddle burst, he might not have been unhorsed. As it chanced, however, saddle, horse, and man rolled on the ground under a cloud of dust.

To extricate himself from the stirrups and fallen steed was to the Templar scarce the work of a moment; and, stung with madness, both at his disgrace and at the acclamations with which it was hailed by the spectators, he drew his sword and waved it in defiance of his conqueror. The Disinherited Knight sprang from his steed, and also unsheathed his sword. The marshals of the field, however, spurred their horses between them, and reminded them that the laws of the tournament did not, on the present occasion, permit this species of encounter.

“We shall meet again, I trust,” said the Templar, casting a resentful glance at his antagonist; “and where there are none to separate us.”

“If we do not,” said the Disinherited Knight, “the fault shall not be mine. On foot or on horseback, with spear, with axe, or with sword, I am alike ready to encounter thee.”

More and angrier words would have been exchanged, but the marshals, crossing their lances betwixt them, compelled them to separate. The Disinherited Knight returned to his first station, and Bois-Guilbert to his tent, where he remained for the rest of the day in an agony of despair.

Without alighting from his horse, the conqueror called



for a bowl of wine, and opening the beaver, or lower part of his helmet, announced that he quaffed it, "To all true English hearts, and to the confusion of foreign tyrants." He then commanded his trumpet to sound a defiance to the challengers, and desired a herald to announce to them that he should make no election, but was willing to encounter them in the order in which they pleased to advance against him.

The gigantic Front-de-Bœuf, armed in sable armor, was the first who took the field. He bore on a white shield a black bull's head, half defaced by the numerous encounters which he had undergone, and bearing the arrogant motto, "Beware, I am here." Over this champion the Disinherited Knight obtained a slight but decisive advantage. Both knights broke their lances fairly, but Front-de-Bœuf, who lost a stirrup in the encounter, was adjudged to have the disadvantage.

In the stranger's third encounter, with Sir Philip de Malvoisin, he was equally successful, striking that baron so forcibly on the casque that the laces of the helmet broke, and Malvoisin, saved from falling only by being unhelmeted, was declared vanquished like his companions.

In his fourth combat, with De Grantmesnil, the Disinherited Knight showed as much courtesy as he had hitherto evinced courage and dexterity. De Grantmesnil's horse, which was young and violent, reared and plunged in the course of the career so as to disturb the rider's aim, and the stranger, declining to take the advantage which this accident afforded him, raised his lance, and, passing his antagonist without touching him, wheeled his horse and rode back again to his own end of the lists, offering his antagonist, by a herald, the chance of a second encounter. This De Grantmesnil declined,



avowing himself vanquished as much by the courtesy as by the address of his opponent.

Ralph de Vipont summed up the list of the stranger's triumphs, being hurled to the ground with such force that the blood gushed from his nose and his mouth, and he was borne senseless from the lists.

The acclamations of thousands applauded the unanimous award of the Prince and marshals, announcing that day's honors to the Disinherited Knight.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE DISINHERITED KNIGHT NAMES THE QUEEN OF LOVE AND BEAUTY

WILLIAM DE WYVIL and Stephen de Martival, the marshals of the field, were the first to offer their congratulations to the victor, praying him, at the same time, to suffer his helmet to be unlaced, or, at least, that he would raise his visor ere they conducted him to receive the prize of the day's tourney from the hands of Prince John. The Disinherited Knight, with all knightly courtesy, declined their request, alleging that he could not at this time suffer his face to be seen, for reasons which he had assigned to the heralds when he entered the lists. The marshals were perfectly satisfied by this reply; for amidst the frequent and capricious vows by which knights were accustomed to bind themselves in the days of chivalry, there were none more common than those by which they engaged to remain incognito for a certain space, or until some particular adventure was achieved. The marshals, therefore, pressed no farther into the mystery of the Disinherited Knight, but, announcing to Prince John the conqueror's desire to remain unknown, they requested permission to bring him before his Grace, in order that he might receive the reward of his valor.

John's curiosity was excited by the mystery observed by the stranger; and, being already displeased with the issue of the tournament, in which the challengers whom he favored had been successively defeated by one knight, he answered haughtily to the marshals, "By the light



of Our Lady's brow, this same knight hath been disinherited as well of his courtesy as of his lands, since he desires to appear before us without uncovering his face. — Wot ye, my lords," he said, turning round to his train, "who this gallant can be that bears himself thus proudly?"

"I cannot guess," answered De Bracy, "nor did I think there had been within the four seas that girth Britain a champion that could bear down these five knights in one day's jousting. By my faith, I shall never forget the force with which he shocked De Vipont. The poor Hospitaler was hurled from his saddle like a stone from a sling."

"Boast not of that," said a Knight of St. John who was present; "your Temple champion had no better luck. I saw your brave lance, Bois-Guilbert, roll thrice over, grasping his hands full of sand at every turn."

De Bracy, being attached to the Templars, would have replied, but was prevented by Prince John. "Silence, sirs!" he said; "what unprofitable debate have we here?"

"The victor," said De Wyvil, "still waits the pleasure of your Highness."

"It is our pleasure," answered John, "that he do so wait until we learn whether there is not some one who can at least guess at his name and quality. Should he remain there till nightfall, he has had work enough to keep him warm."

"Your Grace," said Waldemar Fitzurse, "will do less than due honor to the victor if you compel him to wait till we tell your Highness that which we cannot know; at least *I* can form no guess — unless he be one of the good lances who accompanied King Richard to Palestine,



and who are now straggling homeward from the Holy Land."

"It may be the Earl of Salisbury," said De Bracy; "he is about the same pitch."

"Sir Thomas de Multon, the Knight of Gilsland, rather," said Fitzurse; "Salisbury is bigger in the bones." A whisper arose among the train, but by whom first suggested could not be ascertained: "It might be the King — it might be Richard Cœur-de-Lion himself!"

"Over gods forbode!" said Prince John, turning as pale as death, and shrinking as if blighted by a flash of lightning; "Waldemar! De Bracy! brave knights and gentlemen, remember your promises, and stand truly by me!"

"Here is no danger impending," said Waldemar Fitzurse; "are you so little acquainted with the gigantic limbs of your father's son, as to think they can be held within the circumference of yonder suit of armor? — De Wyvil and Martival, you will best serve the Prince by bringing forward the victor to the throne, and ending an error that has conjured all the blood from his cheeks. — Look at him more closely," he continued; "your Highness will see that he wants three inches of King Richard's height, and twice as much of his shoulder breadth. The very horse he backs could not have carried the ponderous weight of King Richard through a single course."

While he was yet speaking, the marshals brought forward the Disinherited Knight to the foot of a wooden flight of steps, which formed the ascent from the lists to Prince John's throne. Still discomposed with the idea that his brother, so much injured, and to whom he was so much indebted, had suddenly arrived in his native kingdom, even the distinctions pointed out by Fitzurse



did not altogether remove the Prince's apprehensions; and while, with a short and embarrassed eulogy upon his valor, he caused to be delivered to him the war-horse assigned as the prize, he trembled lest from the barred visor of the mailed form before him an answer might be returned in the deep and awful accents of Richard the Lion-hearted.

But the Disinherited Knight spoke not a word in reply to the compliment of the Prince, which he acknowledged only with a profound obeisance.

The horse was led into the lists fully accoutered with the richest war-furniture; which, however, scarcely added to the value of the noble creature in the eyes of those who were judges. Laying one hand upon the pommel of the saddle, the Disinherited Knight vaulted at once upon the back of the steed without making use of the stirrup, and, brandishing aloft his lance, rode twice around the lists, exhibiting the points and paces of the horse with the skill of a perfect horseman.

The Prince made a sign with his truncheon as the Knight passed him in his second career around the lists. The Knight turned towards the throne, and, sinking his lance until the point was within a foot of the ground, remained motionless, as if expecting John's commands, while all admired the dexterity with which he instantly reduced his fiery steed from a state of high excitation to the stillness of an equestrian statue.

“ Sir Disinherited Knight,” said Prince John, “ since that is the only title by which we can address you, it is now your duty, as well as privilege, to name the fair lady who, as Queen of Honor and of Love, is to preside over next day's festival. If, as a stranger in our land, you should require the aid of other judgment to guide your own, we can only say that Alicia, the daughter of



our gallant knight Waldemar Fitzurse, has at our court been long held the first in beauty as in place. Nevertheless, it is your undoubted prerogative to confer on whom you please this crown, by the delivery of which to the lady of your choice the election of to-morrow's Queen will be formal and complete.—Raise your lance."

The Knight obeyed; and Prince John placed upon its point a coronet of green satin, having around its edge a circlet of gold, the upper edge of which was relieved by arrow-points and hearts placed interchangeably.

The Disinherited Knight passed the gallery, close to that of the Prince, in which the Lady Alicia was seated in the full pride of triumphant beauty; and, pacing forwards slowly around the lists, he seemed to exercise his right of examining the numerous fair faces which adorned that splendid circle.

At length the champion paused beneath the balcony in which the Lady Rowena was placed, and the expectation of the spectators was excited to the utmost.

It must be owned that, if an interest displayed in his success could have bribed the Disinherited Knight, the part of the lists before which he paused had merited his predilection. Cedric the Saxon, overjoyed at the discomfiture of the Templar, and still more so at the miscarriage of his two malevolent neighbors, Front-de-Bœuf and Malvoisin, had, with his body half stretched over the balcony, accompanied the victor in each course, not with his eyes only, but with his whole heart and soul. The Lady Rowena had watched the progress of the day with equal attention, though without openly betraying the same intense interest. Even the unmoved Athelstane had shown symptoms of shaking off his apathy, when, calling for a huge goblet of muscadine, he quaffed it to the health of the Disinherited Knight.



Another group, stationed under the gallery occupied by the Saxons, had shown no less interest in the fate of the day.

“ Father Abraham! ” said Isaac of York, when the first course was run betwixt the Templar and the Disinherited Knight, “ how fiercely that Gentile rides! Ah, the good horse that was brought all the long way from Barbary, he takes no more care of him than if he were a wild ass’s colt — and the noble armor that was worth so many zecchins to Joseph Pareira, the armorer of Milan, besides seventy in the hundred of profits, he cares for it as little as if he had found it in the highways! ”

“ If he risks his own person and limbs, father,” said Rebecca, “ in doing such a dreadful battle, he can scarce be expected to spare his horse and armor.”

“ Child! ” replied Isaac, somewhat heated, “ thou knowest not what thou speakest. His neck and limbs are his own; but his horse and armor belong to — Holy Jacob! what was I about to say? Nevertheless, it is a good youth.— See, Rebecca! — see, he is again about to go up to battle against the Philistine! — Pray, child — pray for the safety of the good youth; and of the speedy horse and the rich armor.— God of my fathers! ” he again exclaimed, “ he hath conquered, and the uncircumcised Philistine hath fallen before his lance, even as Og the King of Bashan, and Sihon, King of the Amorites, fell before the sword of our fathers! — Surely he shall take their gold and their silver, and their war-horses, and their armor of brass and of steel, for a prey and for a spoil.”

The same anxiety did the worthy Jew display during every course that was run, seldom failing to hazard a hasty calculation concerning the value of the horse and armor which were forfeited to the champion upon each



new success. There had been therefore no small interest taken in the success of the Disinherited Knight by those who occupied the part of the lists before which he now paused.

Whether from indecision or some other motive of hesitation, the champion of the day remained stationary for more than a minute, while the eyes of the silent audience were riveted upon his motions; and then, gradually and gracefully sinking the point of his lance, he deposited the coronet which it supported at the feet of the fair Rowena. The trumpets instantly sounded, while the heralds proclaimed the Lady Rowena the Queen of Beauty and of Love for the ensuing day, menacing with suitable penalties those who should be disobedient to her authority.

There was some murmuring among the damsels of Norman descent, who were as much unused to see the preference given to a Saxon beauty as the Norman nobles were to sustain defeat in the games of chivalry which they themselves had introduced. But these sounds of disaffection were drowned by the popular shout of "Long live the Lady Rowena, the chosen and lawful Queen of Love and Beauty!" To which many in the lower area added, "Long live the Saxon Princess! long live the race of the immortal Alfred!"

However unacceptable these sounds might be to Prince John and to those around him, he saw himself nevertheless obliged to confirm the nomination of the victor. Calling to horse, he left his throne, mounted his jennet, and accompanied by his train, he again entered the lists. Spurring his horse, as if to give vent to his vexation, he made the animal bound forward to the gallery where Rowena was seated, with the crown still at her feet.



“ Assume,” he said, “ fair lady, the mark of your sovereignty, to which none vows homage more sincerely than ourself, John of Anjou; and if it please you to-day, with your noble sire and friends, to grace our banquet in the Castle of Ashby, we shall learn to know the empress to whose service we devote to-morrow.”

Rowena remained silent, and Cedric answered for her in his native Saxon.

“ The Lady Rowena,” he said, “ possesses not the language in which to reply to your courtesy, or to sustain her part in your festival. I also, and the noble Athelstane of Coningsburgh, speak only the language, and practice only the manners of our fathers. We therefore decline with thanks your Highness’s courteous invitation to the banquet. To-morrow the Lady Rowena will take upon her the state to which she has been called by the free election of the victor Knight, confirmed by the acclamations of the people.”

So saying, he lifted the coronet and placed it upon Rowena’s head, in token of her acceptance of the temporary authority assigned to her.

“ What says he? ” said Prince John, affecting not to understand the Saxon language, in which, however, he was well skilled. The purport of Cedric’s speech was repeated to him in French. “ It is well,” he said; “ to-morrow we will ourself conduct this mute sovereign to her seat of dignity.—You, at least, Sir Knight,” he added, turning to the victor, who had remained near the gallery, “ will this day share our banquet? ”

The Knight, speaking for the first time, in a low and hurried voice, excused himself by pleading fatigue, and the necessity of preparing for to-morrow’s encounter.

“ It is well,” said Prince John, haughtily; “ although



unused to such refusals, we will endeavor to digest our banquet as we may, though ungraced by the most successful in arms, and his elected Queen of Beauty.”

So saying, he prepared to leave the lists with his glittering train, and his turning his steed for that purpose was the signal for the breaking up and dispersion of the spectators.

Yet, with the vindictive memory proper to offended pride, especially when combined with conscious want of desert, John had hardly proceeded three paces ere again, turning around, he fixed an eye of stern resentment upon the yeoman who had displeased him in the early part of the day, and issued his commands to the men-at-arms who stood near: “On your life, suffer not that fellow to escape.”

The yeoman stood the angry glance of the Prince with the same unvaried steadiness which had marked his former deportment, saying, with a smile: “I have no intention to leave Ashby until the day after to-morrow. I must see how Staffordshire and Leicestershire can draw their bows — the forests of Needwood and Charnwood must rear good archers.”

“I,” said Prince John to his attendants, but not in direct reply — “I will see how he can draw his own; and woe betide him unless his skill should prove some apology for his insolence!” Prince John resumed his retreat from the lists, and the dispersion of the multitude became general.

The victor of the day, anxious to withdraw himself from popular notice, accepted the accommodation of one of those pavilions pitched at the extremities of the lists, the use of which was courteously tendered him by the marshals of the field.

Beyond the precincts of the lists more than one forge



was erected; and these now began to glimmer through the twilight, announcing the toil of the armorers, which was to continue through the whole night, in order to repair or alter the suits of armor to be used again on the morrow.



## CHAPTER X

### HOW GURTH PAID ISAAC FOR THE ARMOR

THE Disinherited Knight had no sooner reached his pavilion than squires and pages in abundance tendered their services to disarm him, to bring fresh attire, and to offer him the refreshment of the bath. But he refused all other assistance save that of his own squire, or rather yoeman — a clownish-looking man, who, wrapped in a cloak of dark-colored felt, and having his head and face half-buried in a Norman bonnet made of black fur, seemed to affect the incognito as much as his master.

The Knight had scarcely finished a hasty meal ere his menial announced to him that five men, each leading a barbed steed, desired to speak with him. The Disinherited Knight had exchanged his armor for the long robe usually worn by those of his condition, which, being furnished with a hood, concealed the features almost as completely as the visor of the helmet.

He therefore stepped boldly forth to the front of his tent, and found in attendance the squires of the challengers, each of whom led his master's charger, loaded with the armor in which he had that day fought.

“According to the laws of chivalry,” said the foremost of these men, “I, Baldwin de Oyley, squire to the redoubted Knight Brian de Bois-Guilbert, make offer to you, styling yourself for the present the Disinherited Knight, of the horse and armor used by the said Brian de Bois-Guilbert in this day's passage of arms, leaving it



with your nobleness to retain or to ransom the same, according to your pleasure; for such is the law of arms.”

The other squires repeated nearly the same formula, and then stood to await the decision of the Disinherited Knight.

“To you four, sirs,” replied the Knight, addressing those who had last spoken, “and to your honorable and valiant masters, I have one common reply. Commend me to the noble knights, your masters, and say, I should do ill to deprive them of steeds and arms which can never be used by braver cavaliers.—I would I could here end my message to these gallant knights; but, being in truth and earnest the Disinherited, I must be thus far bound to your masters, that they will, of their courtesy, be pleased to ransom their steeds and armor, since that which I wear I can hardly term mine own.”

“We stand commissioned, each of us,” answered the squire of Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, “to offer a hundred zecchins in ransom of these horses and suits of armor.”

“It is sufficient,” said the Disinherited Knight. “Half the sum my present necessities compel me to accept; of the remaining half, distribute one moiety among yourselves, sir squires, and divide the other half betwixt the heralds and the pursuivants, and minstrels, and attendants.”

The squires, with cap in hand, and low reverences, expressed their deep sense of a courtesy and generosity not often practiced, at least upon a scale so extensive. The Disinherited Knight then addressed his discourse to Baldwin, the squire of Brian de Bois-Guilbert. “From your master,” said he, “I will accept neither arms nor ransom. Say to him in my name, that our strife is not ended — no, not till we have fought as well with swords as with lances, as well on foot as on horseback. To this



mortal quarrel he has himself defied me, and I shall not forget the challenge.— Meantime, let him be assured that I hold him not as one of his companions, with whom I can with pleasure exchange courtesies; but rather as one with whom I stand upon terms of mortal defiance.”

“ My master,” answered Baldwin, “ knows how to requite scorn with scorn, and blows with blows, as well as courtesy with courtesy. Since you disdain to accept from him any share of the ransom at which you have rated the arms of the other knights, I must leave his armor and his horse here, being well assured that he will never deign to mount the one nor wear the other.”

“ You have spoken well, good squire,” said the Disinherited Knight, “ well and boldly, as it beseemeth him to speak who answers for ~~an~~ absent master. Leave not, however, the horse and armor here. Restore them to thy master; or, if he scorns to accept them, retain them, good friend, for thine own use. So far as they are mine, I bestow them upon you freely.”

Baldwin made a deep obeisance, and retired with his companions; and the Disinherited Knight entered the pavilion.

“ Thus far, Gurth,” said he, addressing his attendant, “ the reputation of English chivalry hath not suffered in my hands.”

“ And I,” said Gurth, “ for a Saxon swineherd, have not ill played the personage of a Norman squire-at-arms.”

“ Yea, but,” answered the Disinherited Knight, “ thou hast ever kept me in anxiety lest thy clownish bearing should discover thee.”

“ Tush! ” said Gurth, “ I fear discovery from none, saving my playfellow, Wamba the Jester, of whom I could never discover whether he were most knave or



fool. Yet I could scarce choose but laugh, when my old master passed so near to me, dreaming all the while that Gurth was keeping his porkers many a mile off, in the thickets and swamps of Rotherwood."

"Trust me, I will requite the risk you run for my love, Gurth," said the Knight. "Meanwhile, I pray you to accept these ten pieces of gold."

"I am richer," said Gurth, putting them into his pouch, "than ever was swineherd or bondsman."

"Take this bag of gold to Ashby," continued his master, "and find out Isaac the Jew of York, and let him pay himself for the horse and arms with which his credit supplied me."

We must now change the scene to the village of Ashby, or rather to a country house in its vicinity belonging to a wealthy Israelite, with whom Isaac, his daughter, and retinue, had taken up their quarters. In an apartment, small indeed, but richly furnished, Rebecca was seated on a heap of embroidered cushions, which, piled along a low platform that surrounded the chamber, served instead of chairs and stools. She was watching the motions of her father with a look of anxious and filial affection, while he paced the apartment with dejected mien and disordered step. "O Jacob!" he exclaimed—"O all ye twelve Holy Fathers of our tribe! what a losing venture is this for one who hath duly kept every jot and tittle of the law of Moses!—Fifty zecchins wrenched from me at one clutch, and by the talons of a tyrant!"

"But, father," said Rebecca, "you seemed to give the gold to Prince John willingly."

"Willingly! the blotch of Egypt upon him!—Willingly, saidst thou?—Aye, as willingly as when, in the



Gulf of Lyons, I flung over my merchandise to lighten the ship, while she labored in the tempest — robed the seething billows in my choice silks — perfumed their briny foam with myrrh and aloes — enriched their caverns with gold and silver work! And was not that an hour of unutterable misery, though my hands made the sacrifice? ”

So saying, he resumed his discontented walk through the apartment.

The evening was now becoming dark, when a Jewish servant entered the apartment and placed upon the table two silver lamps, fed with perfumed oil; the richest wines and the most delicate refreshments were at the same time displayed by another Israelitish domestic on a small ebony table, inlaid with silver. The servant informed Isaac that a Nazarene (so they termed Christians while conversing among themselves) desired to speak with him. Isaac at once replaced on the table the untasted glass of Greek wine which he had just raised to his lips, and saying hastily to his daughter, “ Rebecca, veil thyself,” commanded the stranger to be admitted.

Just as Rebecca had dropped over her fine features a screen of silver gauze which reached to her feet, the door opened, and Gurth entered, wrapped in the ample folds of his Norman mantle. His appearance was rather suspicious than prepossessing, especially as, instead of doffing his bonnet, he pulled it still deeper over his rugged brow.

“ Art thou Isaac the Jew of York? ” said Gurth.

“ I am,” replied Isaac, “ and who art thou? ”

“ That is not to the purpose,” answered Gurth.

“ As much as my name is to thee,” replied Isaac; “ for without knowing thine, how can I hold intercourse with thee? ”



“Easily,” answered Gurth; “I, being to pay money, must know that I deliver it to the right person; thou, who art to receive it, wilt not, I think, care very greatly by whose hands it is delivered.”

“Oh,” said the Jew, “you are come to pay monies? Holy Father Abraham! that altereth our relation to each other. And from whom dost thou bring it?”

“From the Disinherited Knight,” said Gurth, “victor in this day’s tournament. It is the price of the armor supplied to him by Kirjath Jairam of Leicester, on thy recommendation. The steed is restored to thy stable. I desire to know the amount of the sum which I am to pay for the armor.”

“I said he was a good youth!” exclaimed Isaac, with joyful exultation. “A cup of wine will do thee no harm,” he added, filling and handing to the swineherd a richer draught than Gurth had ever before tasted. “And how much money,” continued Isaac, “hast thou brought with thee?”

“Holy Virgin!” said Gurth, setting down the cup, “what nectar these unbelieving dogs drink, while true Christians are fain to quaff ale as muddy and thick as the draff we give to hogs! — What money have I brought with me?” continued the Saxon, when he had finished this uncivil ejaculation, “even but a small sum; something in hand the whilst. What, Isaac! thou must bear a conscience, though it be a Jewish one.”

“Nay, but,” said Isaac, “thy master has won goodly steeds and rich armors with the strength of his lance and of his right hand — but ’tis a good youth — the Jew will take these in present payment, and render him back the surplus.”

“My master has disposed of them already.”

“Ah! that was wrong,” said the Jew — “that was the



part of a fool. No Christian here could buy so many horses and armor — no Jew except myself would give him half the values. But thou hast a hundred zecchins with thee in that bag,” said Isaac, prying under Gurth’s cloak, “it is a heavy one.”

“I have heads for cross-bow bolts in it,” said Gurth, readily.

“Well, then,” said Isaac, panting and hesitating between habitual love of gain and a new-born desire to be liberal in the present instance, “if I should say that I would take eighty zecchins for the good steed and the rich armor, which leaves me not a guilder’s profit, have you money to pay me?”

“Barely,” said Gurth, though the sum demanded was more reasonable than he expected, “and it will leave my master nigh penniless. Nevertheless, if such be your least offer, I must be content.”

“Fill thyself another goblet of wine,” said the Jew. “Ah! eighty zecchins is too little. It leaveth no profit for the usages of the monies; and, besides, the good horse may have suffered wrong in this day’s encounter. Oh, it was a hard and a dangerous meeting! man and steed rushing on each other like wild bulls of Bashan; the horse cannot but have had wrong.”

“And I say,” replied Gurth, “he is sound, wind and limb; and you may see him now in your stable. And I say, over and above, that seventy zecchins is enough for the armor, and I hope a Christian’s word is as good as a Jew’s. If you will not take seventy, I will carry this bag” (and he shook it till the contents jingled) “back to my master.”

“Nay, nay!” said Isaac; “lay down the talents — the shekels — the eighty zecchins, and thou shalt see I will consider thee liberally.”



Gurth at length complied, telling out eighty zecchins upon the table; and the Jew delivered out to him an acquittance for the horse and suit of armor. The Jew's hand trembled for joy as he wrapped up the first seventy pieces of gold. The last ten he told over with much deliberation, pausing, and saying something as he took each piece from the table and dropped it into his purse. It seemed as if his avarice were struggling with his better nature, compelling him to pouch zecchin after zecchin, while his generosity urged him to restore some part at least to his benefactor, or as a donation to his agent. His whole speech ran nearly thus:

“ Seventy-one, seventy-two — thy master is a good youth — seventy-three — an excellent youth — seventy-four — that piece hath been clipped within the ring — seventy-five — and that looketh light of weight — seventy-six — when thy master wants money, let him come to Isaac of York — seventy-seven — that is, with reasonable security.” Here he made a considerable pause, and Gurth had good hope that the last three pieces might escape the fate of their comrades; but the enumeration proceeded; “ Seventy-eight — thou art a good fellow — seventy-nine — and deservest something for thyself — ”

Here the Jew paused again, and looked at the last zecchin, intending, doubtless, to bestow it upon Gurth. He weighed it upon the tip of his finger, and made it ring by dropping it upon the table. Had it rung too flat, or had it felt a hair's breath too light, generosity had carried the day; but, unhappily for Gurth, the chime was full and true, the zecchin plump, newly coined, and a grain above weight. Isaac could not find it in his heart to part with it, so dropped it into his purse as if in absence of mind, with the words, “ Eighty completes the tale, and I trust thy master will reward thee handsomely.



Surely," he added, looking earnestly at the bag, "thou hast more coins in that pouch?"

Gurth grinned, which was his nearest approach to a laugh, as he replied, "About the same quantity which thou hast just told over so carefully." He then folded the quittance, and put it under his cap, adding, "Peril of thy beard, Jew, see that this be full and ample!" He filled himself, unbidden, a third goblet of wine, and left the apartment without ceremony.

"Rebecca," said the Jew, "that Ishmaelite hath gone somewhat beyond me. Nevertheless, his master is a good youth — aye, and I am well pleased that he hath gained shekels of gold and shekels of silver, even by the speed of his horse and by the strength of his lance, which, like that of Goliath the Philistine, might vie with a weaver's beam."

As he turned to receive Rebecca's answer, he observed that during his chaffering with Gurth she had left the apartment unperceived.

In the meanwhile, Gurth had descended the stair, and, having reached the dark ante-chamber or hall, was puzzling to discover the entrance, when a figure in white, shown by a small silver lamp which she held in her hand, beckoned him into a side apartment. Gurth followed her, and found, to his joyful surprise, that his fair guide was the beautiful Jewess whom he had seen at the tournament, and a short time in her father's apartment.

She asked him the particulars of his transaction with Isaac, which he detailed accurately.

"My father did but jest with thee, good fellow," said Rebecca; "he owes thy master deeper kindness than these arms and steed could pay, were their value tenfold. What sum didst thou pay my father even now?"



“ Eighty zecchins,” said Gurth, surprised at the question.

“ In this purse,” said Rebecca, “ thou wilt find a hundred. Restore to thy master that which is his due, and enrich thyself with the remainder. Haste — begone — stay not to render thanks! and beware how you pass through this crowded town, where thou mayest easily lose both thy burden and thy life.— Reuben,” she added, clapping her hands together, “ light forth this stranger, and fail not to draw lock and bar behind him.”

“ By St. Dunstan,” said Gurth, as he stumbled up the dark avenue, “ this is no Jewess, but an angel from heaven! Ten zecchins from my brave young master — twenty from this pearl of Zion! — Oh, happy day! — Such another, Gurth, will redeem thy bondage, and make thee a brother as free of thy guild as the best. And then do I lay down my swineherd’s horn and staff, and take the freeman’s sword and buckler, and follow my young master to the death, without hiding either my face or my name.”



## CHAPTER XI

### GURTH AND THE OUTLAWS.

THE nocturnal adventures of Gurth were not yet concluded. After passing one or two straggling houses which stood in the outskirts of the village, he found himself in a deep lane, running between two banks overgrown with hazel and holly, while here and there a dwarf oak hung its arms altogether across the path. Just as he attained the upper end of the lane, where the underwood was thickest, four men sprung upon him, two from each side of the road, and seized him so fast that resistance, if at first practicable, would have been now too late.—“Surrender your charge,” said one of them; “we are the deliverers of the commonwealth, who ease every man of his burden.”

“You should not ease me of mine so lightly,” muttered Gurth, whose surly honesty could not be tamed even by the pressure of immediate violence, “had I it but in my power to give three strokes in its defense.”

“We shall see that presently,” said the robber; and, speaking to his companions, he added, “bring along the knave. I see he would have his head broken as well as his purse cut, and so be let blood in two veins at once.”

Gurth was hurried along, and found himself in a straggling thicket. His rough conductors stopped unexpectedly in an irregular open space, on which the beams of the moon fell without much interruption from



boughs and leaves. Here his captors were joined by two other persons, apparently belonging to the gang. They had short swords by their sides, and quarter-staves in their hands, and Gurth could now observe that all six wore visors, which rendered their occupation a matter of no question.

“What money hast thou, churl?” said one of the thieves.

“Thirty zecchins of my own property,” answered Gurth, doggedly.

“A forfeit — a forfeit,” shouted the robbers; “a Saxon hath thirty zecchins, and returns sober from a village! An undeniable and unredeemable forfeit of all he hath about him.”

“I hoarded it to purchase my freedom,” said Gurth.

“Thou art an ass,” replied one of the thieves; “three quarts of double ale had rendered thee as free as thy master, aye, and freer too, if he be a Saxon like thyself.”

“A sad truth,” replied Gurth; “but if these same thirty zecchins will buy my freedom from you, unloose my hands and I will pay them to you.”

“Hold,” said one who seemed to exercise some authority over the others; “this bag which thou bearest, as I can feel through thy cloak, contains more coin than thou hast told us of.”

“It is the good knight my master’s,” answered Gurth, “of which, assuredly, I would not have spoken a word, had you been satisfied with working your will upon mine own property.”

“Thou art an honest fellow,” replied the robber, “I warrant thee; and we worship not St. Nicholas so devoutly but what thy thirty zecchins may yet escape, if thou deal uprightly with us. Meantime, render up thy



trust for the time." So saying, he took from Gurth's breast the large leathern pouch, in which the purse given him by Rebecca was inclosed, as well as the rest of the zecchins, and then continued his interrogation — "Who is thy master?"

"The Disinherited Knight," said Gurth.

"Whose good lance," replied the robber, "won a prize in to-day's tourney? What is his name and lineage?"

"It is his pleasure," answered Gurth, "that they be concealed; and from me, assuredly, you will learn nought of them."

"What is thine own name and lineage?"

"To tell that," said Gurth, "might reveal my master's."

"Thou art a saucy groom," said the robber; "but of that anon. How comes thy master by this gold? Is it of his inheritance, or by what means hath it accrued to him?"

"By his good lance," answered Gurth. "These bags contain the ransom of four good horses and four good suits of armor."

"How much is there?" demanded the robber.

"Two hundred zecchins."

"Only two hundred zecchins!" said the bandit; "your master hath dealt liberally by the vanquished, and put them to a cheap ransom. Name those who paid the gold."

Gurth did so.

"The armor and horse of the Templar Brian de Bois-Guilbert — at what ransom were they held? — Thou seest thou canst not deceive me."

"My master," replied Gurth, "will take nought from the Templar save his life's blood. They are on terms of



mortal defiance, and cannot hold courteous intercourse together.”

“ Indeed! ” repeated the robber, and paused after he had said the word. “ And what wert thou now doing at Ashby with such a charge in thy custody? ”

“ I went thither to render to Isaac the Jew of York,” replied Gurth, “ the price of a suit of armor with which he fitted my master for this tournament.”

“ And how much didst thou pay to Isaac? — Methinks, to judge by weight, there is still two hundred zecchins in this pouch.”

“ I paid to Isaac,” said the Saxon, “ eighty zecchins, and he restored me a hundred in lieu thereof.”

“ How! what! ” exclaimed all the robbers at once; “ darest thou trifle with us, that thou tellest such improbable lies? ”

“ What I tell you,” said Gurth, “ is as true as the moon is in heaven. You will find the just sum in a silken purse within the leathern pouch, and separate from the rest of the gold.”

“ Bethink thee, man,” said the Captain, “ thou speakest of a Jew — of an Israelite,— as unapt to restore gold as the dry sand of his deserts to return the cup of water which the pilgrim spills upon them.”

“ There is no more mercy in them,” said another of the banditti, “ than in an unbribed sheriff’s officer.”

“ It is, however, as I say,” said Gurth.

“ Strike a light instantly,” said the Captain; “ I will examine this said purse; and if it be as this fellow says, the Jew’s bounty is little less miraculous than the stream which relieved his fathers in the wilderness.”

A light was procured accordingly, and the robber proceeded to examine the purse. The others crowded around him, and even two who had hold of Gurth relaxed their



grasp while they stretched their necks to see the issue of the search. Availing himself of their negligence, by a sudden exertion of strength and activity Gurth shook himself free of their hold, and might have escaped, could he have resolved to leave his master's property behind him. But such was no part of his intention. He wrenched a quarter-staff from one of the fellows, struck down the Captain, who was altogether unaware of his purpose, and had well-nigh repossessed himself of the pouch and treasure. The thieves, however, were too nimble for him, and again secured both the bag and the trusty Gurth.

“Knave!” said the Captain, getting up, “thou hast broken my head, and with other men of our sort thou wouldst fare the worse for thy insolence. But thou shalt know thy fate instantly. First let us speak of thy master; the knight's matters must go before the squire's, according to the due order of chivalry. Stand thou fast in the meantime — if thou stir again, thou shalt have that will make thee quiet for thy life — Comrades!” he then said, addressing his gang, “this purse is embroidered with Hebrew characters, and I well believe the yeoman's tale is true. The errant knight, his master, must needs pass us toll-free. He is too like ourselves for us to make booty of him, since dogs should not worry dogs where wolves and foxes are to be found in abundance.”

“Like us!” answered one of the gang; “I should like to hear how that is made good.”

“Why,” answered the Captain, “is he not poor and disinherited as we are? — Doth he not win his substance at the sword's point as we do? — Hath he not beaten Front-de-Bœuf and Malvoisin, even as we would beat them if we could? — Is he not the enemy to life and death of Brian de Bois-Guilbert, whom we have so much



reason to fear? And were all this otherwise, wouldst thou have us show a worse conscience than a Jew? ”

“ Nay, that were a shame,” muttered the other fellow; “ and yet, when I served in the band of stout old Gandelyn, we had no such scruples of conscience. And this insolent peasant — he too, I warrant me, is to be dismissed scatheless? ”

“ Not if *thou* canst scathe him,” replied the Captain. “ Here, fellow,” continued he, addressing Gurth, “ canst thou use the staff, that thou startst to it so readily? ”

“ I think,” said Gurth, “ thou shouldst be best able to reply to that question.”

“ Nay, by my troth, thou gavest me a round knock,” replied the Captain; “ do as much for this fellow, and thou shalt pass scot-free, and if thou dost not — why, by my faith, as thou art such a sturdy knave, I think I must pay thy ransom myself.— Take thy staff, Miller,” he added, “ and keep thy head; and do you others let the fellow go, and give him a staff — there is light enough to lay on load by.”

The two champions, being alike armed with quarter-staves, stepped forward into the center of the open space, in order to have the full benefit of the moonlight; the thieves in the meantime laughing, and crying to their comrade, “ Miller! beware thy toll-dish.” The Miller, on the other hand, holding his quarter-staff by the middle, and making it flourish round his head after the fashion which the French call “ making the little mill,” exclaimed boastfully, “ Come on, churl, an thou darest; thou shalt feel the strength of a miller’s thumb! ”

“ If thou be’st a miller,” answered Gurth, undauntedly, making his weapon play around his head with equal



dexterity, "thou art doubly a thief, and I, as a true man, bid thee defiance."

So saying, the two champions closed together, and for a few minutes they displayed great equality in strength, courage, and skill, intercepting and returning the blows of their adversary with the most rapid dexterity, while, from the continued clatter of their weapons, a person at a distance might have supposed that there were at least six persons engaged on each side. Long they fought equally, until the Miller began to lose temper at finding himself so stoutly opposed. This gave Gurth, whose temper was steady, though surly, the opportunity of acquiring a decided advantage.

The Miller pressed furiously forward, dealing blows with either end of his weapon alternately, and striving to come to half-staff distance, while Gurth defended himself against the attack, keeping his hands about a yard asunder, and covering himself by shifting his weapon with great celerity, so as to protect his head and body. Thus did he maintain the defensive, making his eye, foot, and hand keep true time, until, observing his antagonist to lose wind, he darted the staff at his face with his left hand; and, as the Miller endeavored to parry the thrust, he slid his right hand down to his left, and with the full swing of the weapon struck his opponent on the left side of the head, who instantly measured his length upon the greensward.

"Well and yeomanly done!" shouted the robbers; "fair play and Old England for ever! The Saxon has saved both his purse and his hide, and the Miller has met his match."

"Thou mayst go thy ways, my friend," said the Captain, addressing Gurth, in special confirmation of the general voice, "and I will cause two of my comrades to



guide thee by the best way to thy master's pavilion, and to guard thee from night-walkers that might have less tender consciences than ours. Take heed, however," he added sternly; "remember thou hast refused to tell thy name — ask not after ours, nor endeavor to discover who or what we are."

Gurth thanked the Captain for his courtesy, and promised to attend to his recommendation. Two of the outlaws, taking up their quarter-staves, and desiring Gurth to follow close in the rear, walked roundly forward along a by-path, which traversed a thicket and the broken ground adjacent to it. On the very verge of the thicket two men spoke to his conductors, and receiving an answer in a whisper, withdrew into the wood, and suffered them to pass unmolested.

When they arrived on the open heath, the thieves guided him straight forward to the top of a little eminence, whence he could see, spread beneath him in the moonlight, the palisades of the lists, and the glimmering pavilions pitched at either end, with the pennons which adorned them fluttering in the moonbeam.

Here the thieves stopped. "We go with you no farther," said they; "it were not safe that we should do so.—Remember the warning you have received: keep secret what has this night befallen you, and you will have no room to repent it; neglect what is now told you, and the Tower of London shall not protect you against our revenge."

"Good night to you, kind sirs," said Gurth; "I shall remember your orders, and trust that there is no offense in wishing you a safer and an honest trade."

Thus they parted, the outlaws returning in the direction from whence they had come, and Gurth proceeding to the tent of his master, to whom, notwithstanding the



injunction he had received, he communicated the whole adventures of the evening.

The Disinherited Knight was filled with astonishment, no less at the generosity of Rebecca, by which, however, he resolved he would not profit, than that of the robbers, to whose profession such a quality seemed totally foreign.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE SECOND DAY OF THE TOURNAMENT

MORNING arose in unclouded splendor; and ere the sun was much above the horizon, the idlest or the most eager of the spectators appeared on the common, moving to the lists as to a general center, in order to secure a favorable situation for viewing the games.

The marshals and their attendants appeared next on the field, together with the heralds, for the purpose of receiving the names of the knights who intended to joust, with the side which each chose to espouse. This was a necessary precaution, in order to secure equality betwixt the two bodies who should be opposed to each other.

According to due formality, the Disinherited Knight was to be considered as leader of the one body, while Brian de Bois-Guilbert, who had been rated as having done second-best in the preceding day, was named first champion of the other band. Those who had concurred in the challenge adhered to his party, of course, excepting only Ralph de Vipont, whom his fall had rendered unfit so soon to put on his armor. There was no want of distinguished and noble candidates to fill up the ranks. About fifty knights were inscribed as desirous of combating upon each side, when the marshals declared that no more could be admitted.

About the hour of ten o'clock the whole plain was crowded with horsemen, horsewomen, and foot-passengers, hastening to the tournament: and shortly after, a



grand flourish of trumpets announced Prince John and his retinue, attended by many of those knights who meant to take share in the games, as well as others who had no such intention.

About the same time arrived Cedric the Saxon, with the Lady Rowena, unattended, however, by Athelstane. This Saxon lord had arrayed his tall and strong person in armor, in order to take his place among the combatants; and, considerably to the surprise of Cedric, had chosen to enlist himself on the part of the Knight Templar. It had been with smothered displeasure that the proud though indolent Lord of Coningsburgh beheld the victor of the preceding day select Rowena as the object of that honor which it became his privilege to confer. In order to punish him for a preference which seemed to interfere with his own suit, Athelstane, confident of his strength, and to whom his flatterers, at least, ascribed great skill in arms, had determined not only to deprive the Disinherited Knight of his powerful succor, but, if an opportunity should occur, to make him feel the weight of his battle-axe.

De Bracy, and other knights attached to Prince John, in obedience to a hint from him, had joined the party of the challengers, John being desirous to secure, if possible, the victory to that side. On the other hand, many other knights, both English and Norman, natives and strangers, took part against the challengers, the more readily that the opposite band was to be led by so distinguished a champion as the Disinherited Knight had proved himself.

As soon as Prince John observed that the destined Queen of the day had arrived upon the field, assuming that air of courtesy which sat well upon him when he was pleased to exhibit it, he rode forward to meet her,



doffed his bonnet, and, alighting from his horse, assisted the Lady Rowena from her saddle, while his followers uncovered at the same time, and one of the most distinguished dismounted to hold her palfrey.

“It is thus,” said Prince John, “that we set the dutiful example of loyalty to the Queen of Love and Beauty, and are ourselves her guide to the throne which she must this day occupy.—Ladies,” he said, “attend your Queen, as you wish in your turn to be distinguished by like honors.”

So saying, the Prince marshaled Rowena to the seat of honor opposite his own, while the fairest and most distinguished ladies present crowded after her to obtain places as near as possible to their temporary sovereign.

No sooner was Rowena seated than a burst of music, half drowned by the shouts of the multitude, greeted her new dignity. Meantime, the sun shone fierce and bright upon the polished arms of the knights of either side, who crowded the opposite extremities of the lists, and held eager conference together concerning the best mode of arranging their line of battle and supporting the conflict.

The heralds then proclaimed silence until the laws of the tourney should be rehearsed. These were calculated in some degree to abate the dangers of the day—a precaution the more necessary as the conflict was to be maintained with sharp swords and pointed lances.

The champions were therefore prohibited to thrust with the sword, and were confined to striking. A knight, it was announced, might use a mace or battle-axe at pleasure; but the dagger was a prohibited weapon. A knight unhorsed might renew the fight on foot with any other on the opposite side in the same predicament; but mounted horsemen were in that case forbidden to assail



him. When any knight could force his antagonist to the extremity of the lists, so as to touch the palisade with his person or arms, such opponent was obliged to yield himself vanquished, and his armor and horse were placed at the disposal of the conqueror. A knight thus overcome was not permitted to take farther share in the combat. If any combatant was struck down, and unable to recover his feet, his squire or page might enter the lists and drag his master out of the press; but in that case the knight was adjudged vanquished, and his arms and horse declared forfeited. The combat was to cease as soon as Prince John should throw down his leading staff, or truncheon — another precaution usually taken to prevent the unnecessary effusion of blood by the too long endurance of a sport so desperate. Any knight breaking the rules of the tournament, or otherwise transgressing the rules of honorable chivalry, was liable to be stripped of his arms, and, having his shield reversed, to be placed in that posture astride upon the bars of the palisade, and exposed to public derision, in punishment of his un-knightly conduct. Having announced these precautions, the heralds concluded with an exhortation to each good knight to do his duty, and to merit favor from the Queen of Beauty and Love.

This proclamation having been made, the heralds withdrew to their stations. The knights, entering at either end of the lists in long procession, arranged themselves in a double file, precisely opposite to each other, the leader of each party being in the center of the foremost rank, a post which he did not occupy until each had carefully arranged the ranks of his party, and stationed every one in his place.

The marshals of the field surveyed their ranks with the utmost exactness, lest either party had more or fewer



than the appointed number. The tale was found exactly complete. The marshals then withdrew from the lists, and William de Wyvil, with a voice of thunder, pronounced the signal words, "Let go!" The trumpets sounded as he spoke — the spears of the champions were at once lowered and placed in the rests — the spurs were dashed into the flanks of the horses, and the two foremost ranks of either party rushed upon each other in full gallop, and met in the middle of the lists with a shock the sound of which was heard at a mile's distance.

When the fight became visible, half the knights on each side were dismounted — some by the dexterity of their adversary's lance; some by the superior weight and strength of opponents, which had borne down both horse and man; some lay stretched on earth as if never more to rise; some had already gained their feet, and were closing hand to hand with those of their antagonists who were in the same predicament; and several on both sides, who had received wounds by which they were disabled, were stopping their blood by their scarfs, and endeavoring to extricate themselves from the tumult. The mounted knights, whose lances had been almost all broken by the fury of the encounter, were now closely engaged with their swords, shouting their war-cries, and exchanging buffets, as if honor and life depended on the issue of the combat.

The tumult was presently increased by the advance of the second rank on either side, which, acting as a reserve, now rushed on to aid their companions. The followers of Brian de Bois-Guilbert shouted: "Ha! Beau-seant! Beau-seant! For the Temple! For the Temple!" The opposite party shouted in answer: "Desdichado! Desdichado!" which watchword they took from the motto upon their leader's shield.



The champions thus encountering each other with the utmost fury, and with alternate success, the tide of battle seemed to flow now toward the southern, now toward the northern, extremity of the lists, as the one or the other party prevailed. Meantime the clang of the blows and the shouts of the combatants mixed fearfully with the sound of the trumpets, and drowned the groans of those who fell, and lay rolling defenseless beneath the feet of the horses. The splendid armor of the combatants was now defaced with dust and blood, and gave way at every stroke of the sword and battle-axe. And between every pause was heard the voice of the heralds exclaiming, "Fight on, brave knights! Man dies, but glory lives! — Fight on — death is better than defeat! — Fight on, brave knights! — for bright eyes behold your deeds! "

Amid the varied fortunes of the combat, the eyes of all endeavored to discover the leaders of each band, who, mingling in the thick of the fight, encouraged their companions both by voice and example. Both displayed great feats of gallantry, nor did either Bois-Guilbert or the Disinherited Knight find in the ranks opposed to them a champion who could be termed their unquestioned match. They repeatedly endeavored to single out each other, spurred by mutual animosity, and aware that the fall of either leader might be considered as decisive of victory. Such, however, was the crowd and confusion that, during the earlier part of the conflict, their efforts to meet were unavailing, and they were repeatedly separated by the eagerness of their followers, each of whom was anxious to win honor by measuring his strength against the leader of the opposite party.

But when the field became thin by the numbers on either side who had yielded themselves vanquished, had been compelled to the extremity of the lists, or been other-



wise rendered incapable of continuing the strife, the Templar and the Disinherited Knight at length encountered hand to hand, with all the fury that mortal animosity, joined to rivalry of honor, could inspire. Such was the address of each in parrying and striking, that the spectators broke forth into a unanimous and involuntary shout, expressive of their delight and admiration.

But at this moment the party of the Disinherited Knight had the worst; the gigantic arm of Front-de-Bœuf on the one flank, and the ponderous strength of Athelstane on the other, bearing down and dispersing those immediately opposed to them. Finding themselves freed from their immediate antagonists, it seems to have occurred to both these knights at the same instant that they would render the most decisive advantage to their party by aiding the Templar in his contest with his rival. Turning their horses, therefore, at the same moment, the Norman spurred against the Disinherited Knight on the one side and the Saxon on the other. It was utterly impossible that the object of this unequal and unexpected assault could have sustained it, had he not been warned by a general cry from the spectators, who could not but take interest in one exposed to such disadvantage.

“Beware! beware! Sir Disinherited!” was shouted so universally that the knight became aware of his danger; and, striking a full blow at the Templar, he reined back his steed in the same moment, so as to escape the charge of Athelstane and Front-de-Bœuf. These knights, therefore, their aim being thus eluded, rushed from opposite sides betwixt the object of their attack and the Templar, almost running their horses against each other ere they could stop their career. Recovering their horses, however, and wheeling them round, the whole three pursued



their united purpose of bearing to the earth the Disinherited Knight.

Nothing could have saved him except the remarkable strength and activity of the noble horse which he had won on the preceding day.

This stood him in the more stead, as the horse of Bois-Guilbert was wounded, and those of Front-de-Bœuf and Athelstane were both tired with the weight of their gigantic masters, clad in complete armor, and with the preceding exertions of the day. The masterly horsemanship of the Disinherited Knight, and the activity of the noble animal which he mounted, enabled him for a few minutes to keep at sword's point his three antagonists, turning and wheeling with the agility of a hawk upon the wing, keeping his enemies as far separate as he could, and rushing now against the one, now against the other, dealing sweeping blows with his sword, without waiting to receive those which were aimed at him in return.

But although the lists rang with the applauses of his dexterity, it was evident that he must at last be overpowered; and the nobles around Prince John implored him with one voice to throw down his warder, and to save so brave a knight from the disgrace of being overcome by odds.

“Not I, by the light of Heaven!” answered Prince John; “this same springal, who conceals his name and despises our proffered hospitality, hath already gained one prize, and may now afford to let others have their turn.” As he spoke thus, an unexpected incident changed the fortune of the day.

There was among the ranks of the Disinherited Knight a champion in black armor, mounted on a black horse, large of size, tall, and to all appearance powerful and strong, like the rider by whom he was mounted. This



knight, who bore on his shield no device of any kind, had hitherto evinced very little interest in the event of the fight, beating off with seeming ease those combatants who attacked him, but neither pursuing his advantages nor himself assailing any one. In short, he had hitherto acted the part rather of a spectator than of a party in the tournament, a circumstance which procured him among the spectators the name of The Black Sluggard.

At once this knight seemed to throw aside his apathy, when he discovered the leader of his party so hard bested; for, setting spurs to his horse, which was quite fresh, he came to his assistance like a thunderbolt, exclaiming, in a voice like a trumpet-call, “Desdichado, to the rescue!” It was high time; for, while the Disinherited Knight was pressing upon the Templar, Front-de-Bœuf had got nigh to him with his uplifted sword; but ere the blow could descend, the Sable Knight dealt a stroke on his head, which, glancing from the polished helmet, lighted with violence scarcely abated on the chamfron of the steed, and Front-de-Bœuf rolled on the ground, both horse and man equally stunned by the fury of the blow. The Black Sluggard then turned his horse upon Athelstane of Coningsburgh; and, his own sword having been broken in his encounter with Front-de-Bœuf, he wrenched from the hand of the bulky Saxon the battle-axe which he wielded, and, like one familiar with the use of the weapon, bestowed him such a blow upon the crest that Athelstane also lay senseless on the field. Having achieved this double feat, for which he was the more highly applauded that it was totally unexpected from him, the knight seemed to resume the sluggishness of his character, returning calmly to the northern extremity of the lists, leaving his leader to cope as he best could with Brian de Bois-Guilbert.



This was no longer matter of so much difficulty as formerly. The Templar's horse had bled much, and gave way under the shock of the Disinherited Knight's charge. Brian de Bois-Guilbert rolled on the field, encumbered with the stirrup, from which he was unable to draw his foot. His antagonist sprung from horseback, waved his fatal sword over the head of his adversary, and commanded him to yield himself; when Prince John saved him the mortification of confessing himself vanquished by casting down his warder and putting an end to the conflict.

Thus ended the memorable field of Ashby-de-la-Zouche, one of the most gallantly contested tournaments of that age; for although only four knights, including one who was smothered by the heat of his armor, had died upon the field, yet upwards of thirty were desperately wounded, four or five of whom never recovered. Several more were disabled for life; and those who escaped best, carried the marks of the conflict to the grave with them. Hence it is always mentioned in the old records as the Gentle and Joyous Passage of Arms of Ashby.

It being now the duty of Prince John to name the knight who had done best, he determined that the honor of the day remained with the knight whom the popular voice had termed the Black Sluggard. It was pointed out to the Prince that the victory had been in fact won by the Disinherited Knight, who, in the course of the day, had overcome six champions with his own hand, and who had finally unhorsed and struck down the leader of the opposite party. But Prince John adhered to his own opinion, on the ground that the Disinherited Knight and his party had lost the day but for the powerful assistance of the Knight of the Black Armor.

To the surprise of all present, however, the knight thus



preferred was nowhere to be found. He had left the lists immediately when the conflict ceased, and had been observed by some spectators to move down one of the forest glades with the same slow pace and listless and indifferent manner which had procured him the epithet of the Black Sluggard. After he had been summoned twice by sound of trumpet and proclamation of the heralds, it became necessary to name another to receive the honors which had been assigned to him. Prince John had now no further excuse for resisting the claim of the Disinherited Knight, whom, therefore, he named the champion of the day.

Through a field slippery with blood and encumbered with broken armor and the bodies of slain and wounded horses, the marshals of the lists again conducted the victor to the foot of Prince John's throne.

“Disinherited Knight,” said Prince John, “since by that title only you will consent to be known to us, we a second time award to you the honors of this tournament, and announce to you your right to claim and receive from the hands of the Queen of Love and Beauty the chaplet of honor which your valor has justly deserved.”

The Knight bowed low and gracefully, but returned no answer.

While the trumpets sounded, while the heralds strained their voices in proclaiming honor to the brave and glory to the victor, while ladies waved their silken kerchiefs and embroidered veils, and while all ranks joined in a clamorous shout of exultation, the marshals conducted the Disinherited Knight across the lists to the foot of that throne of honor which was occupied by the Lady Rowena.

On the lower step of this throne the champion was made to kneel down. Indeed, his whole action since the



fight had ended seemed rather to have been upon the impulse of those around him than from his own free will; and it was observed that he tottered as they guided him the second time across the lists. Rowena, descending from her station with a graceful and dignified step, was about to place the chaplet which she held in her hand upon the helmet of the champion, when the marshals exclaimed with one voice, "It must not be thus — his head must be bare." The Knight muttered faintly a few words, which were lost in the hollow of his helmet; but their purport seemed to be a desire that his casque might not be removed.

Whether from love of form or from curiosity, the marshals paid no attention to his expressions of reluctance, but unhelmed him by cutting the laces of his casque, and undoing the fastening of his gorget. When the helmet was removed, the well-formed yet sunburned features of a young man of twenty-five were seen, amid a profusion of short, fair hair. His countenance was as pale as death, and marked in one or two places with streaks of blood.

Rowena had no sooner beheld him than she uttered a faint shriek; but at once summoning up the energy of her disposition, and compelling herself, as it were, to proceed, while her frame yet trembled with the violence of sudden emotion, she placed upon the drooping head of the victor the splendid chaplet which was the destined reward of the day, and pronounced in a clear and distinct tone these words: "I bestow on thee this chaplet, Sir Knight, as the meed of valor assigned to this day's victor." Here she paused a moment, and then firmly added, "And upon brows more worthy could a wreath of chivalry never be placed!"

The knight stooped his head and kissed the hand of the lovely Sovereign by whom his valor had been rewarded;



and then, sinking yet farther forward, lay prostrate at her feet.

There was a general consternation. Cedric, who had been struck mute by the sudden appearance of his banished son, now rushed forward, as if to separate him from Rowena. But this had been already accomplished by the marshals of the field, who, guessing the cause of Ivanhoe's swoon, had hastened to undo his armor, and found that the head of a lance had penetrated his breastplate and inflicted a wound in his side.



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE PRIZE FOR ARCHERY

THE name of Ivanhoe was no sooner pronounced than it flew from mouth to mouth with all the celerity with which eagerness could convey and curiosity receive it. It was not long ere it reached the circle of the Prince, whose brow darkened as he heard the news. Looking around him, however, with an air of scorn, "My lords," said he, "what think ye of the doctrine the learned tell us concerning innate attractions and antipathies? Methinks that I felt the presence of my brother's minion, even when I least guessed whom yonder suit of armor inclosed."

"Front-de-Bœuf must prepare to restore his fief of Ivanhoe," said De Bracy.

"Aye," answered Waldemar Fitzurse, "this gallant is likely to reclaim the castle and manor which Richard assigned to him, and which your Highness's generosity has since given to Front-de-Bœuf."

"Front-de-Bœuf," replied John, "is a man more willing to swallow three manors such as Ivanhoe than to disgorge one of them."

Waldemar, whose curiosity had led him towards the place where Ivanhoe had fallen to the ground, now returned. "The gallant," said he, "is likely to give your Highness little disturbance, and to leave Front-de-Bœuf in the quiet possession of his gains; he is severely wounded."



“Whatever becomes of him,” said Prince John, “he is victor of the day; and were he tenfold our enemy, or the devoted friend of our brother, which is perhaps the same, his wounds must be looked to — our own physician shall attend him.”

A stern smile curled the Prince’s lip as he spoke. Waldemar Fitzurse hastened to reply that Ivanhoe was already removed from the lists, and in the custody of his friends.

“I was somewhat afflicted,” he said, “to see the grief of the Queen of Love and Beauty, whose sovereignty of a day this event has changed into mourning. I am not a man to be moved by a woman’s lament for her lover, but this same Lady Rowena suppressed her sorrow with such dignity of manner that it could only be discovered by her folded hands and her tearless eye, which trembled as it remained fixed on the lifeless form before her.”

“Who is this Lady Rowena,” said Prince John, “of whom we have heard so much?”

“A Saxon heiress of large possessions,” replied the Prior Aymer; “a rose of loveliness, and a jewel of wealth.”

“We shall cheer her sorrows,” said Prince John, “and amend her blood, by wedding her to a Norman. She seems a minor, and must therefore be at our royal disposal in marriage.—How sayst thou, De Bracy? What thinkst thou of gaining fair lands and livings, by wedding a Saxon, after the fashion of the followers of the Conqueror?”

“If the lands are to my liking, my lord,” answered De Bracy, “it will be hard to displease me with a bride.”

“We will not forget it,” said Prince John; “and that we may instantly go to work, command our seneschal



presently to order the attendance of the Lady Rowena and her company — that is, the rude churl her guardian, and the Saxon ox whom the Black Knight struck down in the tournament — upon this evening's banquet.— De Bigot," he added to his seneschal, "thou wilt word this our second summons so courteously as to gratify the pride of these Saxons, and make it impossible for them again to refuse; although, by the bones of Becket, courtesy to them is casting pearls before swine."

Prince John had proceeded thus far, and was about to give the signal for retiring from the lists, when a small billet was put into his hand.

"From whence?" said Prince John, looking at the person by whom it was delivered.

"From foreign parts, my lord, but from whence I know not," replied his attendant. "A Frenchman brought it hither, who said he had ridden night and day to put it into the hands of your Highness."

The Prince looked narrowly at the superscription, and then at the seal, placed so as to secure the floss-silk with which the billet was surrounded, and which bore the impression of three fleurs-de-lis. John then opened the billet with apparent agitation, which visibly and greatly increased when he had perused the contents:

"Take heed to yourself, for the Devil is unchained!"

The Prince turned as pale as death. Recovering from the first effects of his surprise, he took Waldemar Fitzurse and De Bracy aside, and put the billet into their hands successively. "It means," he added, in a faltering voice, "that my brother Richard has obtained his freedom."

"This may be a false alarm or a forged letter," said De Bracy.



“It is France’s own hand and seal,” replied Prince John.

“It is time, then,” said Fitzurse, “to draw our party to a head, either at York or some other central place. A few days later, and it will be indeed too late. Your Highness must break short this present mummary.”

“The yeomen and commons,” said De Bracy, “must not be dismissed discontented, for lack of their share in the sports.”

“The day,” said Waldemar, “is not yet very far spent — let the archers shoot a few rounds at the target, and the prize be adjudged. This will be an abundant fulfillment of the Prince’s promises, so far as this herd of Saxon serfs is concerned.”

“I thank thee, Waldemar,” said the Prince; “thou remindest me, too, that I have a debt to pay to that insolent peasant who yesterday insulted our person. Our banquet also shall go forward to-night as we proposed. Were this my last hour of power, it should be an hour sacred to revenge and to pleasure.”

The sound of the trumpets soon recalled those spectators who had already begun to leave the field; and proclamation was made that Prince John, suddenly called by high and peremptory public duties, held himself obliged to discontinue the entertainments of to-morrow’s festival; nevertheless, that, unwilling so many good yeomen should depart without a trial of skill, he was pleased to appoint them, before leaving the ground, presently to execute the competition of archery intended for the morrow. To the best archer a prize was to be awarded, being a bugle-horn, mounted with silver, and a silken baldric richly ornamented with a medallion of St. Hubert, the patron of silvan sport.

More than thirty yeomen at first presented themselves



as competitors, several of whom were rangers and under-keepers in the royal forests of Needwood and Charnwood. When, however, the archers understood with whom they were to be matched, upwards of twenty withdrew themselves from the contest, unwilling to encounter the dishonor of almost certain defeat. For in those days the skill of each celebrated marksman was well known.

The diminished list of competitors for silvan fame still amounted to eight. Prince John stepped from his royal seat to view more nearly the persons of these chosen yeomen, several of whom wore the royal livery. Having satisfied his curiosity by this investigation, he looked for the object of his resentment, whom he observed standing on the same spot, and with the same composed countenance as upon the preceding day.

“Fellow,” said Prince John, “I guessed by thy insolent babble thou wert no true lover of the long-bow, and I see thou darest not adventure thy skill among such merry men as stand yonder.”

“Under favor, sir,” replied the yeoman, “I have another reason for refraining to shoot, beside the fearing discomfiture and disgrace.”

“And what is thy other reason?” said Prince John, who, for some cause which perhaps he could not himself have explained, felt a painful curiosity respecting this individual.

“Because,” replied the woodsman, “I know not if these yeomen and I are used to shoot at the same marks; and because, moreover, I know not how your Grace might relish the winning of a third prize by one who has unwittingly fallen under your displeasure.”

Prince John colored as he put the question, “What is thy name, yeoman?”



“Locksley,” answered the yeoman.

“Then, Locksley,” said Prince John, “thou shalt shoot in thy turn, when these yeomen have displayed their skill. If thou carriest the prize, I will add to it twenty nobles; but if thou lovest it, thou shalt be stripped of thy Lincoln green and scourged out of the lists with bowstrings, for a wordy and insolent braggart.”

“And how if I refuse to shoot on such a wager?” said the yeoman. “Your Grace’s power, supported by so many men-at-arms, may indeed easily strip and scourge me, but cannot compel me to bend or to draw my bow.”

“If thou refusest my fair proffer,” said the Prince, “the Provost of the lists shall cut thy bowstring, break thy bow and arrows, and expel thee from the presence as a faint-hearted craven.”

“This is no fair chance you put on me, proud Prince,” said the yeoman, “to compel me to peril myself against the best archers of Leicester and Staffordshire, under the penalty of infamy if they should overshoot me. Nevertheless, I will obey your pleasure.”

“Look to him close, men-at-arms,” said Prince John; “his heart is sinking; I am jealous lest he attempt to escape the trial.—And do you, good fellows, shoot boldly round; a buck and a butt of wine are ready for your refreshment in yonder tent, when the prize is won.”

One by one the archers, stepping forward, delivered their shafts yeomanlike and bravely. Of twenty-four arrows shot in succession, ten were fixed in the target, and the others ranged so near it that, considering the distance of the mark, it was accounted good archery. Of the ten shafts which hit the target, two within the inner ring were shot by Hubert, a forester in the service of Malvoisin, who was accordingly pronounced victorious.



“ Now, Locksley,” said Prince John to the bold yeoman, with a bitter smile, “ wilt thou try conclusions with Hubert, or wilt thou yield up bow, baldric, and quiver to the Provost of the sports? ”

“ Sith it be no better,” said Locksley, “ I am content to try my fortune; on condition that when I have shot two shafts at yonder mark of Hubert’s, he shall be bound to shoot one at that which I shall propose.”

“ That is but fair,” answered Prince John, “ and it shall not be refused thee.—If thou dost beat this braggart, Hubert, I will fill the bugle with silver pennies for thee.”

“ A man can but do his best,” answered Hubert; “ but my grandsire drew a good long-bow at Hastings, and I trust not to dishonor his memory.”

The former target was now removed, and a fresh one of the same size placed in its room. Hubert, who, as victor in the first trial of skill, had the right to shoot first, took his aim with great deliberation, long measuring the distance with his eye, while he held in his hand his bended bow, with the arrow placed on the string. At length he made a step forward, and, raising the bow at the full stretch of his left arm, till the center or grasping-place was nigh level with his face, he drew his bow-string to his ear. The arrow whistled through the air, and lighted within the inner ring of the target, but not exactly in the center.

“ You have not allowed for the wind, Hubert,” said his antagonist, bending his bow, “ or that had been a better shot.”

So saying, and without showing the least anxiety to pause upon his aim, Locksley stepped to the appointed station, and shot his arrow as carelessly in appearance as if he had not even looked at the mark. He was



speaking almost at the instant that the shaft left the bowstring, yet it alighted in the target two inches nearer to the white spot which marked the center than that of Hubert.

“By the light of Heaven!” said Prince John to Hubert, “an thou suffer that runagate knave to overcome thee, thou art worthy of the gallows!”

Hubert had but one set speech for all occasions. “An your Highness were to hang me,” he said, “a man can but do his best. Nevertheless, my grandsire drew a good bow —”

“The foul fiend on thy grandsire and all his generation!” interrupted John. “Shoot, knave, and shoot thy best, or it shall be the worse for thee!”

Thus exhorted, Hubert resumed his place, and, not neglecting the caution which he had received from his adversary, he made the necessary allowance for a very light air of wind which had just risen, and shot so successfully that his arrow alighted in the very center of the target.

“A Hubert! a Hubert!” shouted the populace, more interested in a known person than in a stranger. “In the clout! — in the clout! — a Hubert forever!”

“Thou canst not mend that shot, Locksley,” said the Prince, with an insulting smile.

“I will notch his shaft for him, however,” replied Locksley.

And letting fly his arrow with a little more precaution than before, it lighted right upon that of his competitor, which it split to shivers. The people who stood around were so astonished at his wonderful dexterity that they could not even give vent to their surprise in their usual clamor. “This must be the devil, and no man of flesh and blood,” whispered the yeomen to each other; “such



archery was never seen since a bow was first bent in Britain."

"And now," said Locksley, "I will crave your Grace's permission to plant such a mark as is used in the North Country; and welcome every yeoman who shall try a shot at it to win a smile from the bonny lass he loves best."

He then turned to leave the lists. "Let your guards attend me," he said, "if you please; I go but to cut a rod from the next willow-bush."

Prince John made a signal that some attendants should follow him in case of his escape; but the cry of "Shame! shame!" which burst from the multitude induced him to alter his ungenerous purpose.

Locksley returned almost instantly with a willow wand about six feet in length, perfectly straight, and rather thicker than a man's thumb. He began to peel this with great composure, observing at the same time that to ask a good woodsman to shoot at a target so broad as had hitherto been used was to put shame upon his skill. "For his own part," he said, "and in the land where he was bred, men would as soon take for their mark King Arthur's round table, which held sixty knights around it. A child of seven years old," he said, "might hit yonder target with a headless shaft; but," added he, walking deliberately to the other end of the lists, and sticking the willow wand upright in the ground, "he that hits that rod at five score yards, I call him an archer fit to bear both bow and quiver before a king, an it were the stout King Richard himself."

"My grandsire," said Hubert, "drew a good bow at the battle of Hastings, and never shot at such a mark in his life — and neither will I. If this young yeoman can cleave that rod, I give him the bucklers — or rather, I yield to the devil that is in his jerkin, and not to any



human skill; a man can but do his best, and I will not shoot where I am sure to miss. I might as well shoot at a wheat straw, or at a sunbeam, as at a twinkling white streak which I can hardly see."

"Cowardly dog!" said Prince John. "Sirrah Locksley, do thou shoot; but if thou hittest such a mark, I will say thou art the first man ever did so."

Locksley again bent his bow, but on the present occasion looked with attention to his weapon, and changed the string, which he thought was no longer truly round, having been a little frayed by the two former shots. He then took his aim with some deliberation, and the multitude awaited the event in breathless silence. The archer vindicated their opinion of his skill; his arrow split the willow rod against which it was aimed. A jubilee of acclamations followed; and even Prince John, in admiration of Locksley's skill, lost for an instant his dislike to his person. "These twenty nobles," he said, "which, with the bugle, thou hast fairly won, are thine own; we will make them fifty if thou wilt take livery and service with us as a yeoman of our body-guard, and be near to our person. For never did so strong a hand bend a bow or so true an eye direct a shaft."

"Pardon me, noble Prince," said Locksley; "but I have vowed that, if ever I take service, it should be with your royal brother King Richard. These twenty nobles I leave to Hubert, who has this day drawn as brave a bow as his grandsire did at Hastings. Had his modesty not refused the trial, he would have hit the wand as well as I."

Hubert shook his head as he received with reluctance the bounty of the stranger; and Locksley, anxious to escape further observation, mixed with the crowd, and was seen no more.



## CHAPTER XIV

### “ TO GET ME A WIFE ”

PRINCE JOHN held his high festival in the Castle of Ashby. The purveyors of the Prince, who exercised on this and other occasions the full authority of royalty, had swept the country of all that could be collected which was esteemed fit for their master's table. Guests also were invited in great numbers; and Prince John had extended his invitation to a few distinguished Saxon and Danish families, as well as to the Norman nobility and gentry of the neighborhood.

Prince John received Cedric and Athelstane with distinguished courtesy, and expressed his disappointment, without resentment, when the indisposition of Rowena was alleged by the former as a reason for her not attending upon his gracious summons.

The long feast had at length its end; and, while the goblet circulated freely, men talked of the feats of the preceding tournament—of the unknown victor in the archery games, of the Black Knight, whose self-denial had induced him to withdraw from the honors he had won, and of the gallant Ivanhoe, who had so dearly bought the honors of the day.

“ We drink this beaker,” said Prince John, “ to the health of Wilfred of Ivanhoe, champion of this Passage of Arms, and grieve that his wound renders him absent from our board.—Let all fill to the pledge, and espe-



cially Cedric of Rotherwood, the worthy father of a son so promising.”

“No, my lord,” replied Cedric, standing up, and placing on the table his untasted cup, “I yield not the name of son to the disobedient youth who at once despises my commands and relinquishes the manners and customs of his fathers. Wilfred left my homely dwelling to mingle with the gay nobility of your brother’s court, where he learned to do those tricks of horsemanship which you prize so highly. He left it contrary to my wish and command; and in the days of Alfred that would have been termed disobedience — aye, and a crime severely punishable.”

“I think,” said Prince John, after a moment’s pause, “that my brother proposed to confer upon his favorite the rich manor of Ivanhoe.”

“He did endow him with it,” answered Cedric; “nor is it my least quarrel with my son that he stooped to hold, as a feudal vassal, the very domains which his fathers possessed in free and independent right.”

“We shall then have your willing sanction, good Cedric,” said Prince John, “to confer this fief upon a person whose dignity will not be diminished by holding land of the British crown.—Sir Reginald Front-de-Bœuf,” he said, turning towards that baron, “I trust you will so keep the goodly barony of Ivanhoe that Sir Wilfred shall not incur his father’s farther displeasure by again entering upon that fief.”

“By St. Anthony!” answered the black-browed giant, “I will consent that your Highness shall hold me a Saxon, if either Cedric or Wilfred, or the best that ever bore English blood, shall wrench from me the gift with which your Highness has graced me.”

“Whoever shall call thee Saxon, Sir Baron,” replied



Cedric, offended at a mode of expression by which the Normans frequently expressed their habitual contempt of the English, “will do thee an honor as great as it is undeserved.”

Front-de-Bœuf would have replied, but Prince John’s petulance and levity got the start.

“Assuredly,” said he, “my lords, the noble Cedric speaks truth; and his race may claim precedence over us as much in the length of their pedigrees as in the longitude of their cloaks.”

“They go before us indeed in the field — as deer before dogs,” said Malvoisin.

“And with good right they may go before us — forget not,” said the Prior Aymer, “the superior decency and decorum of their manners.”

“Their singular abstemiousness and temperance,” said De Bracy, forgetting the plan which promised him a Saxon bride.

“Together with the courage and conduct,” said Brian de Bois-Guilbert, “by which they distinguished themselves at Hastings and elsewhere.”

While, with smooth and smiling cheek, the courtiers, each in turn, followed their Prince’s example, and aimed a shaft of ridicule at Cedric, the face of the Saxon became inflamed with passion. At length he spoke, and, addressing himself to Prince John as the head and front of the offense which he had received, “Whatever,” he said, “have been the follies and vices of our race, a Saxon would have been held vile and worthless who should in his own hall, and while his own wine-cup passed, have treated, or suffered to be treated, an unoffending guest as your Highness has this day beheld me used; and whatever was the misfortune of our fathers on the field of Hastings, those may at least be silent



(here he looked at Front-de-Bœuf and the Templar) who have within these few hours once and again lost saddle and stirrup before the lance of a Saxon.”

“By my faith, a biting jest!” said Prince John. “How like you it, sirs?—Our Saxon subjects rise in spirit and courage, become shrewd in wit and bold in bearing, in these unsettled times.—What say ye, my lords? By this good light, I hold it best to take our galleys and return to Normandy in time.”

“For fear of the Saxons?” said De Bracy, laughing. “We should need no weapon but our hunting spears to bring these boars to bay.”

“A truce with your raillery, Sir Knights,” said Fitzurse; “and it were well,” he added, addressing the Prince, “that your Highness should assure the worthy Cedric there is no insult intended him by jests which must sound but harshly in the ear of a stranger.”

“Insult!” answered Prince John, resuming his courtesy of demeanor; “I trust it will not be thought that I could mean or permit any to be offered in my presence. Here! I fill my cup to Cedric himself, since he refuses to pledge his son’s health.”

The cup went round amid the well-dissembled applause of the courtiers, which, however, failed to make the impression on the mind of the Saxon that had been designed. He was silent when the royal pledge again passed round, “To Sir Athelstane of Coningsburgh.”

The knight made his obeisance, and showed his sense of the honor by draining a huge goblet in answer to it.

“And now, sirs,” said Prince John, who began to be warmed with the wine which he had drank, “having done justice to our Saxon guests, we will pray of them some requital to our courtesy. Worthythane,” he continued, addressing Cedric, “may we pray you to name



to us some Norman whose mention may least sully your mouth, and to wash down with a goblet of wine all bitterness which the sound may leave behind it? ”

Fitzurse arose while Prince John spoke, and, gliding behind the seat of the Saxon, whispered to him not to omit the opportunity of putting an end to unkindness betwixt the two races by naming Prince John. The Saxon replied not to this politic insinuation, but, rising up, and filling his cup to the brim, he addressed Prince John in these words: “ Your Highness has required that I should name a Norman deserving to be remembered at our banquet. This, perchance, is a hard task, since it calls on the slave to sing the praises of the master — upon the vanquished, while pressed by all the evils of conquest, to sing the praises of the conqueror. Yet I *will* name a Norman — the first in arms and in place — the best and the noblest of his race. And the lips that shall refuse to pledge me to his well-earned fame, I term false and dishonored, and will so maintain them with my life.—I quaff this goblet to the health of Richard the Lion-hearted! ”

Prince John, who had expected that his own name would close the Saxon’s speech, started when that of his injured brother was so unexpectedly introduced. He raised mechanically the wine-cup to his lips, then instantly set it down, to view the demeanor of the company at this unexpected proposal, which many of them felt it as unsafe to oppose as to comply with. Some of them, ancient and experienced courtiers, closely imitated the example of the Prince himself, raising the goblet to their lips, and again replacing it before them. There were many who, with a more generous feeling, exclaimed, “ Long live King Richard! and may he be speedily restored to us! ” And some few, among whom were



Front-de-Bœuf and the Templar, in sullen disdain suffered their goblets to stand untasted before them. But no man ventured directly to gainsay a pledge filled to the health of the reigning monarch.

Having enjoyed his triumph for about a minute, Cedric said to his companion, “Up, noble Athelstane! we have remained here long enough, since we have requited the hospitable courtesy of Prince John’s banquet. Those who wish to know further of our rude Saxon manners must henceforth seek us in the homes of our fathers, since we have seen enough of royal banquets and enough of Norman courtesy.”

So saying, he arose and left the banqueting-room, followed by Athelstane, and by several other guests, who, partaking of the Saxon lineage, held themselves insulted by the sarcasms of Prince John and his courtiers.

“By the bones of St. Thomas,” said Prince John, as they retreated, “the Saxon churls have borne off the best of the day, and have retreated with triumph!”

“We have drunk and we have shouted,” said Prior Aymer; “it were time we left our wine flagons. I must move several miles forward this evening upon my homeward journey.”

“They are breaking up,” said the Prince in a whisper to Fitzurse; “their fears anticipate the event, and this coward Prior is the first to shrink from me.”

“Fear not, my lord,” said Waldemar; “I will show him such reasons as shall induce him to join us when we hold our meeting at York.—Sir Prior,” he said, “I must speak with you in private before you mount your palfrey.”

No spider ever took more pains to repair the shattered meshes of his web than did Waldemar Fitzurse to reunite and combine the scattered members of Prince



John's cabal. To the young and wild nobles he held out the prospect of unpunished license and uncontrolled revelry, to the ambitious that of power, and to the covetous that of increased wealth and extended domains.

“If Richard returns,” said Fitzurse, “he returns to enrich his needy and impoverished crusaders at the expense of those who did not follow him to the Holy Land. Are ye afraid of his power? We acknowledge him a strong and valiant knight; but these are not the days of King Arthur, when a champion could encounter an army. If Richard indeed comes back, it must be alone, unfollowed, unfriended. The bones of his gallant army have whitened the sands of Palestine. The few of his followers who have returned have straggled hither like this Wilfred of Ivanhoe, beggared and broken men.”

These and many more arguments had the expected weight with the nobles of Prince John's faction. Most of them consented to attend the proposed meeting at York, for the purpose of making general arrangements for placing the crown upon the head of Prince John.

It was late at night when, worn out and exhausted with his various exertions, however gratified with the result, Fitzurse, returning to the Castle of Ashby, met De Bracy, who had exchanged his banqueting garments for a short green kirtle, with hose of the same cloth and color, a leathern cap or headpiece, a short sword, a horn slung over his shoulder, a long-bow in his hand, and a bundle of arrows stuck in his belt. Had Fitzurse met this figure in an outer apartment, he would have passed him without notice, as one of the yeomen of the guard; but finding him in the inner hall, he looked at him with more attention, and recognized the Norman knight in the dress of an English yeoman.



“ What mummerly is this, De Bracy? ” said Fitzurse, somewhat angrily; “ is this a time for Christmas gambols and quaint maskings, when the fate of our master, Prince John, is on the very verge of decision? What on earth dost thou purpose by this absurd disguise at a moment so urgent? ”

“ To get me a wife,” answered De Bracy, coolly, “ after the manner of the tribe of Benjamin. Which is as much as to say, that in this same equipment I will fall upon that herd of Saxon bullocks who have this night left the castle, and carry off from them the lovely Rowena. Seem I not in this garb as bold a forester as ever blew horn? The blame of the violence shall rest with the outlaws of the Yorkshire forests. I have sure spies on the Saxons’ motions. To-night they sleep in the convent of St. Wittol, or Withold, at Burton-on-Trent. Next day’s march brings them within our reach, and, falcon-ways, we swoop on them at once. Presently after I will appear in mine own shape, play the courteous knight, rescue the unfortunate and afflicted fair one from the hands of the rude ravishers, conduct her to Front-de-Bœuf’s castle, or to Normandy, if it should be necessary, and produce her not again to her kindred until she be the bride and dame of Maurice de Bracy. It will be the work of a few hours, and I shall be at York at the head of my daring and valorous fellows, as ready to support any bold design as thy policy can be to form one. But I hear my comrades assembling, and the steeds stamping and neighing in the outer court.—Farewell.—I go, like a true knight, to win the smiles of beauty.”

“ Like a true knight! ” repeated Fitzurse, looking after him; “ like a fool, I should say, or like a child, who will leave the most serious and needful occupation to



chase the down of the thistle that drives past him.— But it is with such tools that I must work — and for whose advantage? — For that of a Prince as likely to be an ungrateful master as he has already proved a rebellious son and an unnatural brother.”



## CHAPTER XV

### A MIRACULOUS HERMITAGE

THE reader cannot have forgotten that the event of the tournament was decided by the exertions of an unknown knight, whom the spectators had entitled the Black Sluggard. This knight had left the field abruptly when the victory was achieved; and when he was called upon to receive the reward of his valor he was holding his course northward, avoiding all frequented paths, and taking the shortest road through the woodlands. He paused for the night at a small hostelry lying out of the ordinary route, where, however, he obtained from a wandering minstrel news of the event of the tourney.

On the next morning the knight departed early, with the intention of making a long journey. His purpose was baffled by the devious paths through which he rode, so that when evening closed upon him he found himself deeply involved in woods, through which indeed there were many open glades and some paths, but such as seemed formed only by the numerous herds of cattle which grazed in the forest, or by the animals of chase and the hunters who made prey of them.

The sun had now sunk behind the Derbyshire hills. After having in vain endeavored to select the most beaten path, the knight resolved to trust to the sagacity of his horse. The good steed, grievously fatigued with so long a day's journey under a rider cased in mail, had no sooner found, by the slackened reins, that he was aban-



doned to his own guidance, than he assumed, of his own accord, a more lively motion. The path which the animal adopted rather turned off from the course pursued by the knight during the day; but the footpath soon after appeared a little wider and more worn, and the tinkle of a small bell gave the knight to understand that he was in the vicinity of some chapel or hermitage.

Accordingly, he soon reached an open plat of turf, on the opposite side of which a rock offered its gray and weatherbeaten front to the traveler. At the bottom of the rock, and leaning, as it were, against it, was constructed a rude hut, built chiefly of the trunks of trees felled in the neighboring forest, and secured against the weather by having its crevices stuffed with moss mingled with clay. The stem of a young fir-tree lopped of its branches, with a piece of wood tied across near the top, was planted upright by the door, as a rude emblem of the holy cross. At a little distance on the right hand, a fountain of the purest water trickled out of the rock, and was received in a hollow stone, which labor had formed into a rustic basin. Beside this fountain were the ruins of a very small chapel, of which the roof had partly fallen in.

The whole peaceful and quiet scene lay glimmering in twilight before the eyes of the traveler, giving him good assurance of lodging for the night; since it was a special duty of those hermits who dwelt in the woods to exercise hospitality towards benighted or bewildered passengers.

Accordingly, the knight leaped from his horse and assailed the door of the hermitage with the butt of his lance, in order to arouse attention and gain admittance.

It was some time before he obtained any answer, and the reply, when made, was unpropitious.

“Pass on, whosoever thou art,” was the answer given



by a deep, hoarse voice from within the hut, “and disturb not the servant of God and St. Dunstan in his evening devotions.”

“Worthy father,” answered the knight, “here is a poor wanderer bewildered in these woods, who gives thee the opportunity of exercising thy charity and hospitality.”

“Good brother,” replied the inhabitant of the hermitage, “it has pleased Our Lady and St. Dunstan to destine me for the object of those virtues, instead of the exercise thereof. I have no provisions here which even a dog would share with me, and a horse of any tenderness of nurture would despise my couch; pass therefore on thy way, and God speed thee.”

“But how,” replied the knight, “is it possible for me to find my way through such a wood as this, when darkness is coming on? I pray you, reverend father, as you are a Christian, to undo your door, and at least point out to me my road.”

“And I pray you, good Christian brother,” replied the anchorite, “to disturb me no more. You have already interrupted one Pater, two Aves, and a Credo, which I, miserable sinner that I am, should, according to my vow, have said before moonrise.”

“The road—the road!” vociferated the knight; “give me directions for the road, if I am to expect no more from thee.”

“The road,” replied the hermit, “is easy to hit. The path from the wood leads to a morass, and from thence to a ford, which, as the rains have abated, may now be passable. When thou hast crossed the ford, thou wilt take care of thy footing up the left bank, as it is somewhat precipitous, and the path, which hangs over the river, has lately, as I learn—for I seldom leave the



duties of my chapel — given way in sundry places. Thou wilt then keep straight forward —”

“ A broken path — a precipice — a ford — and a morass! ” said the knight, interrupting him. “ Sir Hermit, if you were the holiest that ever wore beard or told bead, you shall scarce prevail on me to hold this road to-night. Either open the door quickly, or, by the rood, I will beat it down and make entry for myself.”

“ Friend wayfarer,” replied the hermit, “ be not importunate; if thou puttest me to use the carnal weapon in mine own defense, it will be e’en the worse for you.”

At this moment a distant noise of barking and growling, which the traveler had for some time heard, became extremely loud and furious, and made the knight suppose that the hermit, alarmed by the threat of making forcible entry, had called the dogs out of some inner recess in which they had been kenneled. Incensed at this preparation on the hermit’s part for making good his inhospitable purpose, the knight struck the door so furiously with his foot that posts as well as staples shook with violence.

The anchorite, not caring again to expose his door to a similar shock, now called out aloud: “ Patience, patience — spare thy strength, good traveler, and I will presently undo the door, though, it may be, my doing so will be little to thy pleasure.”

The door accordingly was opened; and the hermit, a large, strong-built man, in his sackcloth gown and hood, girt with a rope of rushes, stood before the knight. He had in one hand a lighted torch, or link, and in the other a baton of crab tree, so thick and heavy that it might well be termed a club. Two large, shaggy dogs, half greyhound, half mastiff, stood ready to rush upon the traveler. But when the torch glanced upon the lofty



crest and golden spurs of the knight who stood without, the hermit, altering probably his original intentions, repressed the rage of his auxiliaries, and, changing his tone to a sort of churlish courtesy, invited the knight to enter his hut, making excuse for his unwillingness to open his lodge after sunset by alleging the multitude of robbers and outlaws who were abroad.

“The poverty of your cell, good father,” said the knight, looking around him, and seeing nothing but a bed of leaves, a crucifix rudely carved in oak, a missal, with a **rough**-hewn table and two stools, and one or two clumsy articles of furniture — “the poverty of your cell should seem a sufficient defense against any risk of thieves, not to mention the aid of two trusty dogs, large and strong enough, I think, to pull down a stag, and, of course, to match with most men.”

“The good keeper of the forest,” said the hermit, “hath allowed me the use of these animals to protect my solitude until the times shall mend.”

Having said this, he fixed his torch in a twisted branch of iron which served for a candlestick; and placing the oaken trivet before the embers of the fire, which he refreshed with some dry wood, he placed a stool upon one side of the table, and beckoned to the knight to do the same upon the other.

They sat down, and gazed with great gravity at each other, each thinking in his heart that he had seldom seen a stronger or more athletic figure than was placed opposite to him.

“Reverend hermit,” said the knight, after looking long and fixedly at his host, “were it not to interrupt your devout meditations, I would pray to know three things of your holiness; first, where I am to put my horse? — secondly, what I can have for supper? —



thirdly, where I am to take up my couch for the night? ”

“ I will reply to you,” said the hermit, “ with my finger, it being against my rule to speak by words where signs can answer the purpose.” So saying, he pointed successively to two corners of the hut. “ Your stable,” said he, “ is there; your bed there; and,” reaching down a platter with two handfuls of parched pease upon it from the neighboring shelf, and placing it upon the table, “ your supper is here.”

The knight shrugged his shoulders, and, leaving the hut, brought in his horse, which in the interim he had fastened to a tree, unsaddled him with much attention, and spread upon the steed’s weary back his own mantle.

The hermit was apparently somewhat moved to compassion by the anxiety as well as address which the stranger displayed in tending his horse; for, muttering something about provender left for the keeper’s palfrey, he dragged out of a recess a bundle of forage, which he spread before the knight’s charger, and immediately afterwards shook down a quantity of dried fern in the corner which he had assigned for the rider’s couch. The knight returned him thanks for his courtesy; and both resumed their seats by the table, whereon stood the trencher of pease placed between them. The hermit, after a long grace, set example to his guest by modestly putting into a very large mouth, furnished with teeth which might have ranked with those of a boar, some three or four dried pease, a miserable grist, as it seemed, for so large and able a mill.

The knight, in order to follow so laudable an example, laid aside his helmet, his corselet, and the greater part of his armor, and showed to the hermit a head thick-curved with yellow hair, high features, blue eyes, re-



markably bright and sparkling, a mouth well-formed, having an upper lip clothed with mustachioes darker than his hair, and bearing altogether the look of a bold, daring, and enterprising man, with which his strong form well corresponded.

The hermit, as if wishing to answer to the confidence of his guest, threw back his cowl, and showed a round bullet-head belonging to a man in the prime of life. It was a bold, bluff countenance, with broad, black eyebrows, a well-turned forehead, and cheeks as round and vermillion as those of a trumpeter. Such a visage, joined to the brawny form of the holy man, spoke rather of sirloins and haunches than of pease and pulse. This incongruity did not escape the guest. After he had with great difficulty accomplished the mastication of a mouthful of the dried pease, he found it absolutely necessary to request his pious entertainer to furnish him with some liquor; who replied to his request by placing before him a large can of the purest water from the fountain.

“It is from the well of St. Dunstan,” said he, “in which, betwixt sun and sun, he baptized five hundred heathen Danes and Britons — blessed be his name!” And, applying his black beard to the pitcher, he took a draught much more moderate in quantity than his encomium seemed to warrant.

“It seems to me, reverend father,” said the knight, “that the small morsels which you eat, together with this holy but somewhat thin beverage, have thriven with you marvelously.”

“Sir Knight,” answered the hermit, “your thoughts, like those of the ignorant laity, are according to the flesh. It has pleased Our Lady and my patron saint to bless the pittance to which I restrain myself, even as



the pulse and water was blessed to the children Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego."

"Holy father," said the knight, "upon whose countenance it hath pleased Heaven to work such a miracle, permit a sinful layman to crave thy name?"

"Thou mayst call me," answered the hermit, "the Clerk of Copmanhurst, for so I am termed in these parts.—They add, it is true, the epithet holy, but I stand not upon that, as being unworthy of such addition.—And now, valiant knight, may I pray ye for the name of my honorable guest?"

"Truly," said the knight, "Holy Clerk of Copmanhurst, men call me in these parts the Black Knight,—many, sir, add to it the epithet of Sluggard, whereby I am no way ambitious to be distinguished."

The hermit could scarcely forbear from smiling at his guest's reply.

"I see," said he, "Sir Sluggish Knight, that thou art a man of prudence and of counsel; and, moreover, I see that my poor monastic fare likes thee not, accustomed, perhaps, as thou hast been, to the license of courts and of camps, and the luxuries of cities; and now I bethink me, Sir Sluggard, that when the charitable keeper of this forest-walk left these dogs for my protection, and also those bundles of forage, he left me also some food, which, being unfit for my use, the very recollection of it had escaped me amid my more weighty meditations."

"I dare be sworn he did so," said the knight; "I was convinced that there was better food in the cell, Holy Clerk, since you first doffed your cowl.—Your keeper is ever a jovial fellow; and none who beheld thy grinders contending with these pease, and thy throat flooded with this ungenial element, could see thee doomed to such horse-provender and horse-beverage (pointing to the



provisions upon the table), and refrain from mending thy cheer. Let us see the keeper's bounty, therefore, without delay."

The hermit cast a wistful look upon the knight, in which there was a sort of comic expression of hesitation, as if uncertain how far he should act prudently in trusting his guest. There was, however, as much of bold frankness in the knight's countenance as was possible to be expressed by features. His smile, too, gave an assurance of faith and loyalty, with which his host could not refrain from sympathizing.

After exchanging a mute glance or two, the hermit went to the further side of the hut, and opened a hutch, which was concealed with great care and some ingenuity. Out of the recesses of a dark closet he brought a large pasty, baked in a pewter platter of unusual dimensions. This mighty dish he placed before his guest, who, using his poniard to cut it open, lost no time in making himself acquainted with its contents.

"How long is it since the good keeper has been here?" said the knight to his host, after having swallowed several hasty morsels of this reinforcement to the hermit's good cheer.

"About two months," answered the father, hastily.

"Everything in your hermitage is miraculous, Holy Clerk!" answered the knight; "for I would have been sworn that the fat buck which furnished this venison had been running on foot within the week."

The hermit was somewhat discountenanced by this observation; and, moreover, he made but a poor figure while gazing on the diminution of the pasty, on which his guest was making desperate inroads — a warfare in which his previous profession of abstinence left him no pretext for joining.



“ I have been in Palestine, Sir Clerk,” said the knight, stopping short of a sudden, “ and I bethink me it is a custom there that every host who entertains a guest shall assure him of the wholesomeness of his food by partaking of it along with him. Far be it from me to suspect so holy a man of aught inhospitable; nevertheless, I will be highly bound to you would you comply with this Eastern custom.”

“ To ease your unnecessary scruples, Sir Knight, I will for once depart from my rule,” replied the hermit. And as there were no forks in those days, his clutches were instantly in the bowels of the pasty.

The ice of ceremony being once broken, it seemed matter of rivalry between the guest and the entertainer which should display the best appetite; and although the former had probably fasted longest, yet the hermit fairly surpassed him.

“ Holy Clerk,” said the knight, when his hunger was appeased, “ I would gauge my good horse yonder against a zecchin, that that same honest keeper to whom we are obliged for the venison has left thee a stoup of wine, or a runlet of canary, or some such trifle, by way of ally to this noble pasty. This would be a circumstance, doubtless, totally unworthy to dwell in the memory of so rigid an anchorite; yet, I think, were you to search yonder crypt once more, you would find that I am right in my conjecture.”

The hermit only replied by a grin; and, returning to the hutch, he produced a leathern bottle, which might contain about four quarts, and two large drinking cups, made of horn and hooped with silver. Having made this goodly provision for washing down the supper, he seemed to think no farther ceremonious scruple necessary on his part; but, filling both cups, and saying, in



the Saxon fashion, "Wassail! Sir Sluggish Knight!" he emptied his own at a draught.

"Drink hail! Holy Clerk of Copmanhurst!" answered the warrior, and did his host reason in a similar brimmer.

"Holy Clerk," said the stranger, after the first cup was thus swallowed, "I cannot but marvel that a man possessed of such thews and sinews as thine, and who therewithal shows the talent of so goodly a trencherman, should think of abiding by himself in this wilderness. In my judgment you are fitter to keep a castle or a fort, eating of the fat and drinking of the strong, than to live here upon pulse and water, or even upon the charity of the keeper. At least, were I as thou, I should find myself both disport and plenty out of the king's deer. There is many a goodly herd in these forests, and a buck will never be missed that goes to the use of St. Dunstan's chaplain."

"Sir Sluggish Knight," replied the Clerk, "these are dangerous words, and I pray you to forbear them. I am true hermit to the king and law, and were I to spoil my liege's game, I should be sure of the prison, and, an my gown saved me not, were in some peril of hanging."

"Nevertheless, were I as thou," said the knight, "I would take my walk by moonlight, when foresters and keepers were warm in bed, and ever and anon—as I pattered my prayers—I would let fly a shaft among the herds of dun deer that feed in the glades.—Resolve me, Holy Clerk, hast thou never practiced such a pastime?"

"Friend Sluggard," answered the hermit, "thou hast seen all that can concern thee of my housekeeping, and something more than he deserves who takes up his quarters by violence. Credit me, it is better to enjoy



the good which God sends thee, than to be impertinently curious how it comes. Fill thy cup, and welcome; and do not, I pray thee, by further impertinent inquiries, put me to show that thou couldst hardly have made good thy lodging had I been earnest to oppose thee."

"By my faith," said the knight, "thou makest me more curious than ever! Thou art the most mysterious hermit I ever met; and I will know more of thee ere we part. As for thy threats, know, holy man, thou speakest to one whose trade it is to find out danger wherever it is to be met with."

"Sir Sluggish Knight, I drink to thee," said the hermit, "respecting thy valor much, but deeming wondrous slightly of thy discretion. If thou wilt take equal arms with me, I will give thee, in all friendship and brotherly love, such sufficing penance and complete absolution that thou shalt not for the next twelve months sin the sin of excess of curiosity."

The knight pledged him, and desired him to name his weapons.

"There is none," replied the hermit, "from the scissors of Delilah and the tenpenny nail of Jael, to the scimitar of Goliath, at which I am not a match for thee. But, if I am to make the election, what sayest thou, good friend, to these trinkets?"

Thus speaking, he opened another hutch, and took out from it a couple of broadswords and bucklers, such as were used by the yeomanry of the period. The knight, who watched his motions, observed that this second place of concealment was furnished with two or three good long-bows, a cross-bow, a bundle of bolts for the latter, and half a dozen sheaves of arrows for the former. A harp, and other matters of a very uncanonical appearance, were also visible when this dark recess was opened.



“ I promise thee, brother Clerk,” said he, “ I will ask thee no more offensive questions. The contents of that cupboard are an answer to all my inquiries; and I see a weapon there (here he stooped and took out the harp) on which I would more gladly prove my skill with thee than at the sword and buckler.”

“ I hope, Sir Knight,” said the hermit, “ thou hast given no good reason for thy surname of the Sluggard. I do promise thee, I suspect thee grievously. Nevertheless, thou art my guest, and I will not put thy manhood to the proof without thine own free will. Sit thee down, then, and fill thy cup; let us drink, sing, and be merry. If thou knowest ever a good lay, thou shalt be welcome to a nook of pasty at Copmanhurst so long as I serve the chapel of St. Dunstan, which, please God, shall be till I change my gray covering for one of green turf. But come, fill a flagon, for it will crave some time to tune the harp; and nought pitches the voice and sharpens the ear like a cup of wine. For my part, I love to feel the grape at my very finger-ends before they make the harp-strings tinkle.”

Notwithstanding the prescription of the genial hermit, with which his guest willingly complied, he found it no easy matter to bring the harp to harmony.

“ Methinks, holy father,” said he, “ the instrument wants one string, and the rest have been somewhat misused.”

“ Aye, mark'st thou that? ” replied the hermit; “ that shows thee a master of the craft. Wine and wassail,” he added, gravely casting up his eyes — “ all the fault of wine and wassail! I told Allan-a-Dale, the northern minstrel, that he would damage the harp if he touched it after the seventh cup, but he would not be controlled.”

The knight brought the strings into some order, and,



after a short prelude, asked his host whether he would choose a *sirvente* in the language of *oc*, or a *lai* in the language of *oui*, or a ballad in the vulgar English.

“ A ballad — a ballad,” said the hermit, “ against all the *ocs* and *ouis* of France. Downright English am I, Sir Knight, and downright English was my patron St. Dunstan; downright English alone shall be sung in this cell.”

“ I will assay, then,” said the knight, “ a ballad composed by a Saxon gleeman, whom I knew in Holy Land.”

It speedily appeared that, if the knight was not a complete master of the minstrel art, his taste for it had at least been cultivated under the best instructors. When the song was ended, the anchorite emphatically declared it a good one, and well sung.

“ And yet,” said he, “ I think my Saxon countryman had herded long enough with the Normans to fall into the tone of their melancholy ditties. Nevertheless, Sir Knight, I drink this cup to thee, to the success of all true lovers.— I fear you are none,” he added, on observing that the knight, whose brain began to be heated with these repeated draughts, qualified his flagon from the water pitcher.

“ Why,” said the knight, “ did you not tell me that this water was from the well of your patron St. Dunstan? ”

“ Aye, truly,” said the hermit, “ and many a hundred pagans did he baptize there, but I never heard that he drank any of it. Everything should be put to its proper use in this world. St. Dunstan knew, as well as any one, the prerogatives of a jovial friar.”

He changed the conversation; fast and furious grew the mirth of the parties, and many a song was exchanged betwixt them, when their revels were interrupted by a loud knocking at the door of the hermitage.



## CHAPTER XVI

“ A WHITE DRAGON ! ”

WHEN Cedric the Saxon saw his son drop down senseless in the lists at Ashby, his first impulse was to order him into the custody and care of his own attendants; but he could not bring himself to acknowledge, in presence of such an assembly, the son whom he had renounced and disinherited. He ordered, however, Oswald to convey Ivanhoe to Ashby as soon as the crowd had dispersed. Oswald, however, was anticipated in this good office. The crowd dispersed, indeed, but the knight was nowhere to be seen.

Oswald suddenly cast his eye upon a person attired like a squire, in whom he recognized the features of his fellow-servant Gurth. Anxious concerning his master's fate, and in despair at his sudden disappearance, the translated swineherd was searching for him everywhere, and had neglected, in doing so, the concealment on which his own safety depended. Oswald deemed it his duty to secure Gurth, as a fugitive of whose fate his master was to judge.

Renewing his inquiries concerning the fate of Ivanhoe, the only information which the cupbearer could collect was, that the knight had been raised with care by certain well-attired grooms, and placed in a litter belonging to a lady among the spectators, which had immediately transported him out of the press. Cedric was informed that Ivanhoe was in careful, and probably



friendly hands. "Let him wander his way," said he; "let those leech his wounds for whose sake he encountered them. He is fitter to do the juggling tricks of the Norman chivalry than to maintain the fame and honor of his English ancestry with the glaive and brown-bill, the good old weapons of his country."

"If to maintain the honor of ancestry," said Rowena, who was present, "it is sufficient to be wise in council and brave in execution, to be boldest among the bold, and gentlest among the gentle, I know no voice, save his father's —"

"Be silent, Lady Rowena! on this subject only I hear you not. Prepare yourself for the Prince's festival. Thither will I go, were it only to show these proud Normans how little the fate of a son who could defeat their bravest can affect a Saxon."

"Thither," said Rowena, "do I NOT go; and I pray you to beware, lest what you mean for courage and constancy shall be accounted hardness of heart."

"Remain at home then, ungrateful lady," answered Cedric; "thine is the hard heart, which can sacrifice the weal of an oppressed people to an idle and unauthorized attachment. I seek the noble Athelstane, and with him attend the banquet of John of Anjou."

He went accordingly to the banquet, of which we have already mentioned the principal events. Immediately upon retiring from the castle, the Saxon thanes, with their attendants, took horse; and it was during the bustle which attended their doing so that Cedric for the first time cast his eyes upon the deserter Gurth. The noble Saxon had returned from the banquet, as we have seen, in no very placid humor, and wanted but a pretext for wreaking his anger upon some one. "The gyves!" he said — "the gyves! Oswald — Hundebert! Dogs



and villains! why leave ye the knave unfettered?"

Without daring to remonstrate, the companions of Gurth bound him with a halter. He submitted to the operation without remonstrance, except that, darting a reproachful look at his master, he said, "This comes of loving your flesh and blood better than mine own."

"To horse, and forward!" said Cedric.

"It is indeed full time," said the noble Athelstane; "for if we ride not the faster, the worthy Abbot Walthoeff's preparations for a rere-supper will be altogether spoiled."

The travelers, however, used such speed as to reach the convent of St. Withold before the apprehended evil took place. The Abbot, himself of ancient Saxon descent, received the noble Saxons with the profuse and exuberant hospitality of their nation, wherein they indulged to a late, or rather an early, hour; nor did they take leave of their reverend host the next morning until they had shared with him a sumptuous refecton.

As the cavalcade left the court of the monastery, a large, lean, black dog, sitting upright, howled most pitiously as the foremost riders left the gate, and presently afterwards, barking wildly, and jumping to and fro, seemed bent upon attaching itself to the party.

"I like not that music, father Cedric," said Athelstane; "in my mind we had better turn back and abide with the Abbot until the afternoon. It is unlucky to travel where your path is crossed by a monk, a hare, or a howling dog, until you have eaten your next meal."

"Away!" said Cedric, impatiently; "the day is already too short for our journey. For the dog, I know it to be the cur of the runaway slave Gurth, a useless fugitive like its master."



So saying, and rising at the same time in his stirrups, impatient at the interruption of his journey, he launched his javelin at poor Fangs; for Fangs it was, who, having traced his master thus far upon his stolen expedition, had here lost him, and was now, in his uncouth way, rejoicing at his reappearance. The javelin inflicted a wound upon the animal's shoulder, and narrowly missed pinning him to the earth; and Fangs fled howling from the presence of the enraged thane.

Meanwhile Cedric and Athelstane, the leaders of the troop, conversed together on the state of the land, and on the chance which there was that the oppressed Saxons might be able to free themselves from the yoke of the Normans. On this subject Cedric was all animation. The restoration of the independence of his race was the idol of his heart, to which he had willingly sacrificed domestic happiness and the interests of his own son. He was now bent upon making a determined effort for the union of Athelstane and Rowena, together with expediting those other measures which seemed necessary to forward the restoration of Saxon independence.

At noon, upon the motion of Athelstane, the travelers paused in a woodland shade by a fountain, to repose their horses and partake of some provisions, with which the hospitable Abbot had loaded a sumpter mule. Their repast was a pretty long one; and these several interruptions rendered it impossible for them to hope to reach Rotherwood without traveling all night, a conviction which induced them to proceed on their way at a more hasty pace than they had hitherto used.

The travelers had now reached the verge of the wooded country, and were about to plunge into its recesses, held dangerous at that time from the number of outlaws whom oppression and poverty had driven to despair and who



occupied the forest in large bands. From these rovers, however, Cedric and Athelstane accounted themselves secure. The outlaws were chiefly peasants and yeomen of Saxon descent, and were generally supposed to respect the persons and property of their countrymen.

As the travelers journeyed on their way, they were alarmed by repeated cries for assistance; and when they rode up to the place from whence they came, they were surprised to find a horse-litter placed upon the ground, beside which sat a young woman, richly dressed in the Jewish fashion, while an old man, whose yellow cap proclaimed him to belong to the same nation, walked up and down with gestures expressive of the deepest despair.

To the inquiries of Athelstane and Cedric, Isaac of York (for it was our old friend) was at length able to explain that he had hired a body-guard of six men at Ashby, together with mules for carrying the litter of a sick friend. They had come thus far in safety; but, having received information from a wood-cutter that there was a strong band of outlaws lying in wait in the woods before them, Isaac's mercenaries had not only taken flight, but had taken off with them the horses which bore the litter, and had left the Jew and his daughter without the means either of defense or of retreat. “ Would it but please your valors,” added Isaac, in a tone of deep humility, “ to permit the poor Jews to travel under your safeguard, I swear by the tables of our Law that never has favor been conferred upon a child of Israel since the days of our captivity which shall be more gratefully acknowledged.”

“ Dog of a Jew! ” said Athelstane, whose memory was of that petty kind which stores up trifles of all kinds, but



particularly trifling offenses, “dost not remember how thou didst beard us in the gallery at the tilt-yard? Fight or flee, or compound with the outlaws as thou dost list, ask neither aid nor company from us.”

“We shall do better,” said Cedric, “to leave them two of our attendants and two horses to convey them back to the next village.”

Rowena strongly seconded the proposal of her guardian. But Rebecca, suddenly quitting her dejected posture, and making her way through the attendants to the palfrey of the Saxon lady, knelt down, and, after the Oriental fashion in addressing superiors, kissed the hem of Rowena’s garment. Then, rising and throwing back her veil, she implored her in the great name of the God whom they both worshiped, that she would have compassion upon them, and suffer them to go forward under their safeguard. “It is not for myself that I pray this favor,” said Rebecca; “nor is it even for that poor old man. But it is in the name of one dear to many, and dear even to you, that I beseech you to let this sick person be transported with care and tenderness, under your protection. For, if evil chance him, the last moment of your life would be embittered with regret for denying that which I ask of you.”

The noble and solemn air with which Rebecca made this appeal gave it double weight with the fair Saxon.

“The man is old and feeble,” she said to her guardian, “the maiden young and beautiful, their friend sick and in peril of his life; Jews though they be, we cannot as Christians leave them in this extremity. Let them unload two of the sumpter mules and put the baggage behind two of the serfs. The mules may transport the litter, and we have led horses for the old man and his daughter.”



Cedric readily assented to what she proposed, and the change of baggage was hastily achieved; for the single word “outlaws” rendered every one sufficiently alert, and the approach of twilight made the sound yet more impressive. Amid the bustle, Gurth was taken from horseback, in the course of which removal he prevailed upon the Jester to slack the cord with which his arms were bound. It was so negligently refastened, perhaps intentionally, on the part of Wamba, that Gurth found no difficulty in freeing his arms altogether from bondage, and then, gliding into the thicket, he made his escape from the party.

The path upon which the party traveled began to descend into a dingle, traversed by a brook whose banks were broken, swampy, and overgrown with dwarf willows. Cedric and Athelstane had just crossed the brook with a part of their followers, when they were assailed in front, flank, and rear at once. The shout of “A white dragon! — a white dragon! — St. George for Merry England!” war-cries adopted by the assailants, as belonging to their assumed character of Saxon outlaws, was heard on every side, and enemies appeared with a rapidity of advance and attack which seemed to multiply their numbers.

Both the Saxon chiefs were made prisoners at the same moment, and each under circumstances expressive of his character. Cedric, the instant that an enemy appeared, launched at him his remaining javelin, which, taking better effect than that which he had hurled at Fangs, nailed the man against an oak tree that happened to be close behind him. Thus far successful, Cedric spurred his horse against a second, drawing his sword at the same time, and striking with such inconsiderate fury that his weapon encountered a thick branch which hung over him, and he



was disarmed by the violence of his own blow. He was instantly made prisoner, and was pulled from his horse by two or three of the banditti who crowded around him. Athelstane shared his captivity, his bridle having been seized and he himself forcibly dismounted long before he could draw his weapon or assume any posture of effectual defense.

The attendants, embarrassed with baggage, surprised and terrified at the fate of their masters, fell an easy prey to the assailants; while the Lady Rowena, in the center of the cavalcade, and the Jew and his daughter in the rear, experienced the same misfortune.

Of all the train none escaped except Wamba, who showed upon the occasion much more courage than those who pretended to greater sense. He possessed himself of a sword belonging to one of the domestics, who was just drawing it with a tardy and irresolute hand, laid it about him like a lion, drove back several who approached him, and made a brave though ineffectual attempt to succor his master. Finding himself overpowered, the Jester at length threw himself from his horse, plunged into the thicket, and, favored by the general confusion, escaped from the scene of action.

Yet the valiant Jester, as soon as he found himself safe, hesitated more than once whether he should not turn back and share the captivity of a master to whom he was sincerely attached.

“I have heard men talk of the blessings of freedom,” he said to himself, “but I wish any wise man would teach me what use to make of it now that I have it.”

As he pronounced these words aloud, a voice very near him called out in a low and cautious tone, “Wamba!” and at the same time a dog, which he recognized to be



Fangs, jumped up and fawned upon him. “ Gurth! ” answered Wamba with the same caution, and the swine-herd immediately stood before him.

“ What is the matter? ” said he, eagerly; “ what mean these cries and that clashing of swords? ”

“ Only a trick of the times,” said Wamba; “ they are all prisoners.”

“ Who are prisoners? ” exclaimed Gurth, impatiently.

“ My lord, and my lady, and Athelstane, and Hundebert and Oswald.”

“ How came they prisoners? — and to whom? ”

“ Our master was too ready to fight,” said the Jester, “ and Athelstane was not ready enough, and no other person was ready at all. And they are prisoners to green cassocks and black visors. And they lie all tumbled about on the green, like the crab-apples that you shake down to your swine. And I would laugh at it,” said the honest Jester, “ if I could for weeping.” And he shed tears of unfeigned sorrow.

Gurth’s countenance kindled. “ Wamba,” he said, “ thou hast a weapon, and thy heart was ever stronger than thy brain; we are only two — but a sudden attack from men of resolution will do much — follow me! ”

“ Whither? and for what purpose? ” said the Jester.

“ To rescue Cedric.”

As the Jester was about to obey, a third person suddenly made his appearance and commanded them both to halt. From his dress and arms, Wamba would have conjectured him to be one of those outlaws who had just assailed his master; but, besides that he wore no mask, the glittering baldric across his shoulder, with the rich bugle-horn which it supported, as well as the calm and commanding expression of his voice and manner, made him, notwithstanding the twilight, recognize Locksley,



the yeoman who had been victorious in the contest for the prize of archery. "What is the meaning of all this," said he, "or who is it that rifle, and ransom, and make prisoners in these forests?"

"You may look at their cassocks close by," said Wamba, "and see whether they be thy children's coats or no — for they are as like thine own as one green peacock is to another."

"I will learn that presently," answered Locksley; "and I charge ye, on peril of your lives, not to stir from the place where ye stand until I return. Obey me, and it shall be the better for you and your masters. — Yet stay, I must render myself as like these men as possible."

So saying, he unbuckled his baldric with the bugle, took a feather from his cap, and gave them to Wamba; then he drew a vizard from his pouch, and, repeating his charges to them to stand fast, went to execute his purpose of reconnoitering.

"Shall we stand fast, Gurth?" said Wamba, "or shall we e'en give him leg-bail? In my foolish mind, he had all the equipage of a thief too much in readiness to be himself a true man."

"Let him be the devil," said Gurth, "an he will. We can be no worse of waiting his return. If he belong to that party, he must already have given them the alarm, and it will avail nothing either to fight or fly. Besides, I have late experience that arrant thieves are not the worst men in the world to have to deal with."

The yeoman returned in the course of a few minutes.

"Friend Gurth," he said, "I have mingled among yon men, and have learned to whom they belong, and whither they are bound. There is, I think, no chance that they will proceed to any actual violence against their



prisoners. For three men to attempt them at this moment were little else than madness; for they are good men of war, and have, as such, placed sentinels to give the alarm when any one approaches. But I trust soon to gather such a force as may act in defiance of all their precautions. You are both servants, and, as I think, faithful servants, of Cedric the Saxon, the friend of the rights of Englishmen. He shall not want English hands to help him in this extremity. Come, then, with me, until I gather more aid.”

So saying, he walked through the wood at a great pace, followed by the Jester and the swineherd. It was not consistent with Wamba's humor to travel long in silence.

“I think,” said he, looking at the baldric and bugle which he still carried, “that I saw the arrow shot which won this gay prize, and that not so long since as Christmas.”

“And I,” said Gurth, “could take it on my halidome that I have heard the voice of the good yeoman who won it, by night as well as by day, and that the moon is not three days older since I did so.”

“Mine honest friends,” replied the yeoman, “who or what I am is little to the present purpose; should I free your master, you will have reason to think me the best friend you have ever had in your lives. And whether I am known by one name or another, or whether I can draw a bow as well or better than a cow-keeper, or whether it is my pleasure to walk in sunshine or by moonlight, are matters which, as they do not concern you, so neither need ye busy yourselves respecting them.”

“Our heads are in the lion's mouth,” said Wamba in a whisper to Gurth, “get them out how we can.”

“Hush — be silent,” said Gurth. “Offend him not by thy folly, and I trust sincerely that all will go well.”



## CHAPTER XVII

### LOCKSLEY TO THE RESCUE

AFTER three hours' good walking the servants of Cedric, with their mysterious guide, arrived at a small opening in the forest, in the center of which grew an oak tree of enormous magnitude. Beneath this tree four or five yeomen lay stretched on the ground, while another, as sentinel, walked to and fro.

Upon hearing the sound of feet approaching, the watch instantly gave the alarm, and the sleepers as suddenly started up and bent their bows. Six arrows placed on the string were pointed towards the quarter from which the travelers approached, when their guide, being recognized, was welcomed with every token of respect and attachment.

“Where is the Miller?” was his first question.

“On the road towards Rotherham.”

“With how many?” demanded the leader, for such he seemed to be.

“With six men, and good hope of booty, if it please St. Nicholas.”

“Devoutly spoken,” said Locksley; “and where is Allan-a-Dale?”

“Walked up towards the Watling Street to watch for the Prior of Jorvaulx.”

“That is well thought on also,” replied the Captain; “and where is the Friar?”

“In his cell.”



“Thither will I go,” said Locksley. “Disperse and seek your companions. Collect what force you can, for there’s game afoot that must be hunted hard, and will turn to bay. Meet me here by daybreak.—And stay,” he added, “I have forgotten what is most necessary of the whole.—Two of you take the road quickly towards Torquilstone, the castle of Front-de-Bœuf. A set of gallants, who have been masquerading in such guise as our own, are carrying a band of prisoners thither.—Watch them closely, for even if they reach the castle before we collect our force, our honor is concerned to punish them, and we will find means to do so. Keep a close watch on them, therefore; and despatch one of your comrades, the lightest of foot, to bring the news of the yeomen thereabout.”

They promised implicit obedience, and departed with alacrity on their different errands. In the meanwhile, their leader and his two companions, who now looked upon him with great respect, pursued their way to the chapel of Copmanhurst.

When they reached the little, moonlight glade, the anchorite and his guest were performing, at the full extent of their very powerful lungs, an old drinking song, of which this was the burden:

“Come, trowl the brown bowl to me,  
Bully boy, bully boy,  
Come, trowl the brown bowl to me.  
Ho! jolly Jenkin, I spy a knave in drinking,  
Come, trowl the brown bowl to me.”

“Now, that is not ill sung,” said Wamba, who had thrown in a few of his own flourishes to help out the chorus. “But who ever expected to hear such a jolly chant come from out a hermit’s cell at midnight!”



“Marry, that should I,” said Gurth, “for the jolly Clerk of Copmanhurst is a known man, and kills half the deer that are stolen in this walk.”

While they were thus speaking, Locksley’s loud and repeated knocks had at length disturbed the anchorite and his guest. “By my beads,” said the hermit, stopping short in a grand flourish, “here come more benighted guests. I would not for my cowl that they found us in this goodly exercise. All men have their enemies, good Sir Sluggard; and there be those malignant enough to construe the hospitable refreshment which I have been offering to you, a weary traveler, for the matter of three short hours, into sheer drunkenness and debauchery, vices alike alien to my profession and my disposition.”

“Base calumniators!” replied the knight; “I would I had the chastising of them. Nevertheless, Holy Clerk, it is true that all have their enemies; and there be those in this very land whom I would rather speak to through the bars of my helmet than barefaced.”

“Get thine iron pot on thy head then, friend Sluggard, as quickly as thy nature will permit,” said the hermit, “while I remove these flagons, whose late contents run strangely in mine own pate; and to drown the clatter, strike into the tune which thou hearest me sing. It is no matter for the words; I scarce know them myself.”

So saying, he struck up a thundering anthem, under cover of which he removed the apparatus of their banquet; while the knight, laughing heartily, and arming himself all the while, assisted his host with his voice from time to time as his mirth permitted.

“What devil’s matins are you after at this hour?” said a voice from without.

“Heaven forgive you, Sir Traveler!” said the hermit, whom his own noise prevented from recognizing accents



which were tolerably familiar to him.—“Wend on your way, in the name of God and St. Dunstan, and disturb not the devotions of me and my holy brother.”

“Mad priest,” answered the voice from without, “open to Locksley!”

“All’s safe — all’s right,” said the hermit to his companion.

“But who is he?” said the Black Knight; “it imports me much to know.”

“Who is he?” answered the hermit; “I tell thee he is a friend.”

“But what friend?” answered the knight; “for he may be friend to thee and none of mine.”

“What friend?” replied the hermit; “why, he is, now that I bethink me a little, the very same honest keeper I told thee of a while since.”

“Aye, as honest a keeper as thou art a pious hermit,” replied the knight, “I doubt it not. But undo the door to him before he beat it from its hinges.”

The hermit speedily unbolted his portal, and admitted Locksley, with his two companions.

“Why, hermit,” was the yeoman’s first question as soon as he beheld the knight, “what boon companion hast thou here?”

“A brother of our order,” replied the Friar, shaking his head; “we have been at our orisons all night.”

“He is a monk of the church militant, I think,” answered Locksley; “and there be more of them abroad. I tell thee, Friar, thou must lay down the rosary and take up the quarter-staff; we shall need every one of our merry men, whether clerk or layman. But,” he added, taking him a step aside, “art thou mad? to give admittance to a knight thou dost not know? Hast thou forgot our articles?”



“Not know him!” replied the Friar, boldly, “I know him as well as the beggar knows his dish.”

“And what is his name, then?” demanded Locksley.

“His name,” said the hermit — “his name is Sir Anthony of Scrabelstone; as if I would drink with a man, and did not know his name!”

“Thou hast been drinking more than enough, Friar,” said the woodsman, “and, I fear, prating more than enough too.”

“Good yeoman,” said the knight, coming forward, “be not wroth with my merry host. He did but afford me the hospitality which I would have compelled from him if he had refused it.”

“Thou compel!” said the Friar; “wait but till I have changed this gray gown for a green cassock, and if I make not a quarter-staff ring twelve upon thy pate, I am neither true clerk nor good woodsman.”

Locksley led the knight a little apart, and addressed him thus: “Deny it not, Sir Knight, you are he who decided the victory to the advantage of the English against the strangers on the second day of the tournament at Ashby.”

“And what follows if you guess truly, good yeoman?” replied the knight.

“I should in that case hold you,” replied the yeoman, “a friend to the weaker party.”

“Such is the duty of a true knight at least,” replied the Black Champion; “and I would not willingly that there were reason to think otherwise of me.”

“But for my purpose,” said the yeoman, “thou shouldst be as well a good Englishman as a good knight; for that which I have to speak of concerns, indeed, the duty of every honest man, but is more especially that of a true-born native of England.”



“ You can speak to no one,” replied the knight, “ to whom England, and the life of every Englishman, can be dearer than to me.”

“ I would willingly believe so,” said the woodsman. “ for never had this country such need to be supported by those who love her. Hear me, and I will tell thee of an enterprise in which, if thou be’st really that which thou seemest, thou mayst take an honorable part. A band of villains, in the disguise of better men than themselves, have made themselves masters of the person of a noble Englishman, called Cedric the Saxon, together with his ward, and his friend Athelstane of Coningsburgh, and have transported them to a castle in this forest, called Torquilstone. I ask of thee, as a good knight and a good Englishman, wilt thou aid in their rescue? ”

“ I am bound by my vow to do so,” replied the knight. “ I have been accustomed to study men’s countenances, and I can read in thine honesty and resolution. I will, therefore, aid thee in setting at freedom these oppressed captives; which done, I trust we shall part better acquainted, and well satisfied with each other.”

The Friar was now completely accoutered as a yeoman, with sword and buckler, bow and quiver, and a strong partisan over his shoulder. He left his cell at the head of the party, and, having carefully locked the door, deposited the key under the threshold.

“ Art thou in condition to do good service, Friar,” said Locksley, “ or does the brown bowl still run in thy head? ”

“ Not more than a draught of St. Dunstan’s fountain will allay,” answered the priest; “ something there is of a whizzing in my brain, and of instability in my legs, but you shall presently see both pass away.”

So saying, he stepped to the stone basin, in which the



waters of the fountain as they fell formed bubbles which danced in the white moonlight, and took so long a draught as if he had meant to exhaust the spring.

“ When didst thou drink as deep a draught of water before, Holy Clerk of Copmanhurst? ” said the Black Knight.

“ Never since my wine-butt leaked, and let out its liquor by an illegal vent,” replied the Friar, “ and so left me nothing to drink but my patron’s bounty here.”

Then, plunging his hands and head into the fountain, he washed from them all marks of the midnight revel.

“ Come on, Jack Priest,” said Locksley, “ and be silent; thou art as noisy as a whole convent on a holy eve, when the Father Abbot has gone to bed.— Come on you, too, my masters; we must collect all our forces, and few enough we shall have, if we are to storm the castle of Reginald Front-de-Bœuf.”



## CHAPTER XVIII

“ WHAT MUMMERY IS THIS? ”

WHILE these measures were taking in behalf of Cedric and his companions, the armed men by whom the latter had been seized, hurried their captives along towards the place of security where they intended to imprison them. But darkness came on fast, and the paths of the wood seemed but imperfectly known to the marauders. They were compelled to make several long halts, and once or twice to return on their road to resume the direction which they wished to pursue. The summer morn had dawned upon them ere they could travel in full assurance that they held the right path. But confidence returned with light, and the cavalcade now moved rapidly forward. Meanwhile, the following dialogue took place between the two leaders of the banditti:

“ It is time thou shouldst leave us, Sir Maurice,” said the Templar to De Bracy, “ in order to prepare the second part of thy mystery. Thou art next, thou knowest, to act the Knight Deliverer.”

“ I have thought better of it,” said De Bracy; “ I will not leave thee till the prize is fairly deposited in Front-de-Bœuf’s castle. I will not give thee the power of cheating me out of the fair prey for which I have run such risks.”

While this dialogue was proceeding, Cedric was endeavoring to wring out of those who guarded him an avowal of their character and purpose. “ You should be



Englishmen," said he; "and yet, sacred Heaven! you prey upon your countrymen as if you were very Normans. You should be my neighbors, and, if so, my friends; for which of my English neighbors have reason to be otherwise? What, then, would you have of me? or in what can this violence serve ye? — Ye are worse than brute beasts in your actions, and will you imitate them in their very dumbness?"

It was in vain that Cedric expostulated with his guards, who had too many good reasons for their silence to be induced to break it. They continued to hurry him along, traveling at a very rapid rate, until Cedric saw the turrets of Front-de-Bœuf's castle raise their gray and moss-grown battlements, glimmering in the morning sun, above the wood by which they were surrounded.

"I did injustice," he said, "to the thieves and outlaws of these woods, when I supposed such banditti to belong to their bands. Tell me, dogs — is it my life or my wealth that your master aims at? Is it too much that two Saxons, myself and the noble Athelstane, should hold land in the country which was once the patrimony of our race? — Put us, then, to death, and complete your tyranny by taking our lives, as you began with our liberties. If the Saxon Cedric cannot rescue England, he is willing to die for her. Tell your tyrannical master, I do only beseech him to dismiss the Lady Rowena in honor and safety. She is a woman, and he need not dread her; and with us will die all who dare fight in her cause."

The attendants remained as mute to this address as to the former, and they now stood before the gate of the castle. De Bracy winded his horn three times, and the archers and cross-bow men, who had manned the wall upon seeing their approach, hastened to lower the draw-bridge and admit them. The prisoners were conducted



to an apartment where a hasty repast was offered them, of which none but Athelstane felt any inclination to partake. Neither had the descendant of the Confessor much time to do justice to the good cheer placed before them, for their guards gave him and Cedric to understand that they were to be imprisoned in a chamber apart from Rowena. Resistance was vain; and they were compelled to follow to a large room, which, rising on clumsy Saxon pillars, resembled those refectories and chapter-houses which may be still seen in the most ancient parts of our most ancient monasteries.

The Lady Rowena was next separated from her train, and conducted, with courtesy, indeed, but still without consulting her inclination, to a distant apartment. The same alarming distinction was conferred on Rebecca, in spite of her father's entreaties, who offered even money, in this extremity of distress, that she might be permitted to abide with him. “Base unbeliever,” answered one of his guards, “when thou hast seen thy lair, thou wilt not wish thy daughter to partake it.” And, without farther discussion, the old Jew was forcibly dragged off in a different direction from the other prisoners. The domestics, after being carefully searched and disarmed, were confined in another part of the castle; and Rowena was refused even the comfort she might have derived from the attendance of her handmaiden Elgitha.

The apartment in which the Saxon chiefs were confined, although at present used as a sort of guard-room, had formerly been the great hall of the castle. It was now abandoned to meaner purposes, because the present lord, among other additions to the convenience, security, and beauty of his baronial residence, had erected a new and noble hall, whose vaulted roof was supported by lighter and more elegant pillars.



Cedric paced the apartment, filled with indignant reflections on the past and on the present, while the apathy of his companion served, instead of patience and philosophy, to defend him against everything save the inconvenience of the present moment.

“ Yes,” said Cedric, half speaking to himself and half addressing himself to Athelstane, “ it was in this very hall that my father feasted with Torquil Wolfganger, when he entertained the valiant and unfortunate Harold, then advancing against the Norwegians, who had united themselves to the rebel Tosti. It was in this hall that Harold returned the magnanimous answer to the ambassador of his rebel brother. Oft have I heard my father kindle as he told the tale. The envoy of Tosti was admitted, when this ample room could scarce contain the crowd of noble Saxon leaders who were quaffing the blood-red wine around their monarch.”

“ I hope,” said Athelstane, somewhat moved by this part of his friend’s discourse, “ they will not forget to send us some wine and refectious at noon.”

Cedric went on with his story without noticing this observation of his friend:

“ The envoy of Tosti,” he said, “ moved up the hall, undismayed by the frowning countenances of all around him, until he made his obeisance before the throne of King Harold.—‘ What terms,’ he said, ‘ Lord King, hath thy brother Tosti to hope, if he should lay down his arms and crave peace at thy hands? ’—‘ A brother’s love,’ cried the generous Harold, ‘ and the fair earldom of Northumberland.’—‘ But should Tosti accept these terms,’ continued the envoy, ‘ what lands shall be assigned to his faithful ally, Hardrada, King of Norway? ’—‘ Seven feet of English ground,’ answered Harold, fiercely, ‘ or, as Hardrada is said to be a giant, perhaps



we may allow him twelve inches more.’—The hall rung with acclamations, and cup and horn were filled to the Norwegian, who should be speedily in possession of his English territory.”

“I could have pledged him with all my soul,” said Athelstane, “for my tongue cleaves to my palate.”

“It is time lost,” muttered Cedric, apart and impatiently, “to speak to him of aught else but that which concerns his appetite! The soul of Hardicanute hath taken possession of him, and he hath no pleasure save to fill, to swill, and to call for more.—Alas!” said he, looking at Athelstane with compassion, “that so dull a spirit should be lodged in so goodly a form! Alas! that such an enterprise as the regeneration of England should turn on a hinge so imperfect! Wedded to Rowena, indeed, her nobler and more generous soul may yet awake the better nature which is torpid within him. Yet how should this be, while Rowena, Athelstane, and I myself remain the prisoners of this brutal marauder, and have been made so perhaps from a sense of the dangers which our liberty might bring to the usurped power of his nation?”

While the Saxon was plunged in these painful reflections, the door of their prison opened and gave entrance to a sewer, holding his white rod of office. This important person advanced into the chamber with a grave pace, followed by four attendants, bearing in a table covered with dishes, the sight and smell of which seemed to be an instant compensation to Athelstane for all the inconvenience he had undergone. The persons who attended on the feast were masked and cloaked.

“What mummary is this?” said Cedric; “think you that we are ignorant whose prisoners we are, when we are in the castle of your master? Tell him,” he con-



tinued, willing to use this opportunity to open a negotiation for his freedom—"tell your master, Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, that we know no reason he can have for withholding our liberty, excepting his unlawful desire to enrich himself at our expense. Tell him that we yield to his rapacity, as in similar circumstances we should do to that of a literal robber. Let him name the ransom at which he rates our liberty, and it shall be paid, providing the exaction is suited to our means."

The sewer made no answer, but bowed his head.

"And tell Sir Reginald Front-de-Bœuf," said Athelstane, "that I send him my mortal defiance, and challenge him to combat with me, on foot or horseback, at any secure place, within eight days after our liberation; which, if he be a true knight, he will not, under these circumstances, venture to refuse or to delay."

"I shall deliver to the knight your defiance," answered the sewer; "meanwhile I leave you to your food."

The captives had not long enjoyed their refreshment, however, ere their attention was disturbed even from this most serious occupation by the blast of a horn winded before the gate. It was repeated three times, with as much violence as if it had been blown before an enchanted castle by the destined knight at whose summons halls and towers, barbican and battlement, were to roll off like a morning vapor. The Saxons started from the table and hastened to the windows. But their curiosity was disappointed; for these outlets only looked upon the court of the castle, and the sound came from beyond its precincts. The summons, however, seemed of importance, for a considerable degree of bustle instantly took place in the castle.



## CHAPTER XIX

### A THOUSAND POUNDS OF SILVER

LEAVING the Saxon chiefs to return to their banquet, we have to look in upon the yet more severe imprisonment of Isaac of York. The poor Jew had been hastily thrust into a dungeon-vault of the castle, the floor of which was deep beneath the level of the ground, and very damp, being lower than even the moat itself. The only light was received through one or two loop-holes far above the reach of the captive's hand. These apertures admitted, even at mid-day, only a dim and uncertain light. Chains and shackles hung rusted and empty on the walls. At one end of this ghastly apartment was a large fire-grate, over the top of which were stretched some transverse iron bars, half-devoured with rust.

The whole appearance of the dungeon might have appalled a stouter heart than that of Isaac, who, nevertheless, was composed under the imminent pressure of danger. He had experience to guide him, as well as hope that he might again, as formerly, be delivered as a prey from the fowler. Above all, he had upon his side that unbending resolution with which Israelites have been frequently known to submit to the uttermost evils which power and violence can inflict upon them, rather than gratify their oppressors by granting their demands.

In this humor of passive resistance, and with his garment collected beneath him to keep his limbs from the wet pavement, Isaac sat in a corner of his dungeon.



The Jew remained without altering his position for nearly three hours, at the expiry of which steps were heard on the dungeon stair. The bolts screamed as they were withdrawn, the hinges creaked as the wicket opened, and Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, followed by the two Saracen slaves of the Templar, entered the prison.

Each of the black slaves had in his hand a small pannier; and, when they entered the dungeon, they stopped at the door until Front-de-Bœuf himself carefully locked and double-locked it. Having taken this precaution, he advanced slowly up the apartment. He paused within three steps of the corner in which the unfortunate Jew had now, as it were, coiled himself up into the smallest possible space, and made a sign for one of the slaves to approach. The black satellite came forward, and, producing from his basket a large pair of scales and several weights, he laid them at the feet of Front-de-Bœuf, and again retired.

“Most accursed dog of an accursed race,” Front-de-Bœuf said, awaking with his deep and sullen voice the sullen echoes of his dungeon-vault, “seest thou these scales?”

The unhappy Jew returned a feeble affirmative.

“In these very scales shalt thou weigh me out,” said the relentless Baron, “a thousand silver pounds, after the just measure and weight of the Tower of London.”

“Holy Abraham!” returned the Jew, finding voice through the very extremity of his danger, “heard man ever such a demand? — Who ever heard, even in a minstrel’s tale, of such a sum as a thousand pounds of silver? — Not within the walls of York, ransack my house and that of all my tribe, wilt thou find the tithe of that huge sum of silver that thou speakest of.”

“I am reasonable,” answered Front-de-Bœuf, “and



if silver be scant, I refuse not gold. At the rate of a mark of gold for each six pounds of silver, thou shalt free thy unbelieving carcass from such punishment as thy heart has never even conceived.”

“Have mercy on me, noble knight!” exclaimed Isaac; “I am old, and poor, and helpless. It were unworthy to triumph over me.—It is a poor deed to crush a worm.”

“Old thou mayst be,” replied the knight; “more shame to their folly who have suffered thee to grow gray in usury and knavery.—Feeble thou mayest be, for when had a Jew either heart or hand?—But rich it is well known thou art.”

“I swear to you, noble knight,” said the Jew, “by all which I believe, and by all which we believe in common —”

“Perjure not thyself,” said the Norman, interrupting him, “and let not thine obstinacy seal thy doom, until thou hast seen and well considered the fate that awaits thee.”

He again made a signal for the slaves to approach, and spoke to them apart, in their own language. The Saracens produced from their baskets a quantity of charcoal, a pair of bellows, and a flask of oil. While the one struck a light with a flint and steel, the other disposed the charcoal in the large, rusty grate, and exercised the bellows until the fuel came to a red glow.

“Seest thou, Isaac,” said Front-de-Bœuf, “the range of iron bars above that glowing charcoal?—On that warm couch thou shalt lie, stripped of thy clothes as if thou wert to rest on a bed of down. One of these slaves shall maintain the fire beneath thee, while the other shall anoint thy wretched limbs with oil, lest the roast should burn.—Now, choose betwixt such a scorching bed



and the payment of a thousand pounds of silver; for, by the head of my father, thou hast no other option."

"So may Abraham, Jacob, and all the fathers of our people assist me," said Isaac, "I cannot make the choice, because I have not the means of satisfying your exorbitant demand!"

"Seize him and strip him, slaves," said the knight, "and let the fathers of his race assist him if they can."

The Jew looked at the glowing furnace over which he was presently to be stretched, and, seeing no chance of his tormentor's relenting, his resolution gave way.

"I will pay," he said, "the thousand pounds of silver.—That is," he added, after a moment's pause, "I will pay it with the help of my brethren; for I must beg as a mendicant at the door of our synagogue ere I make up so unheard-of a sum.—When and where must it be delivered?"

"Here," replied Front-de-Bœuf—"here it must be delivered; weighed it must be—weighed and told down on this very dungeon floor.—Thinkest thou I will part with thee until thy ransom is secure?"

The Jew groaned deeply. "Grant me," he said, "at least, with my own liberty, that of the companions with whom I travel. They scorned me as a Jew, yet they pitied my desolation, and because they tarried to aid me by the way a share of my evil hath come upon them; moreover, they may contribute in some sort to my ransom."

"If thou meanest yonder Saxon churls," said Front-de-Bœuf, "their ransom will depend upon other terms than thine. Mind thine own concerns, Jew, I warn thee, and meddle not with those of others."

"I am, then," said Isaac, "only to be set at liberty, together with mine wounded friend?"



“ Shall I twice recommend it,” said Front-de-Bœuf, “ to a son of Israel, to meddle with his own concerns, and leave those of others alone? Since thou hast made thy choice, it remains but that thou payest down thy ransom. When shall I have the shekels, Isaac? ”

“ Let my daughter Rebecca go forth to York,” answered Isaac, “ with your safe-conduct, noble knight, and so soon as man and horse can return, the treasure — ”

“ Thy daughter! ” said Front-de-Bœuf, as if surprised, “ by heavens, Isaac, I would I had known of this. I gave yonder black-browed girl to be a handmaiden to Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert. ”

The yell which Isaac raised at this unfeeling communication made the very vault to ring, and astounded the two Saracens so much that they let go their hold of the Jew. He availed himself of his enlargement to throw himself on the pavement and clasp the knees of Front-de-Bœuf.

“ Take all that you have asked,” said he, “ Sir Knight; take ten times more — reduce me to ruin and to beggary, if thou wilt,— nay, pierce me with thy poniard, broil me on that furnace; but spare my daughter, spare the honor of a helpless maiden. She is the image of my deceased Rachel — she is the last of six pledges of her love. Will you deprive a widowed husband of his sole remaining comfort? ”

“ Dog of an infidel,” said Front-de-Bœuf, “ take thought to pay me the ransom thou hast promised, or woe betide thy Jewish throat! ”

“ Robber and villain! ” said the Jew, retorting the insults of his oppressor with passion, which, however impotent, he now found it impossible to bridle, “ I will pay thee nothing — not one silver penny will I pay thee



— unless my daughter is delivered to me in safety and honor! ”

“ Art thou in thy senses, Israelite? ” said the Norman, sternly; “ has thy flesh and blood a charm against heated iron and scalding oil? ”

“ I care not! ” said the Jew, rendered desperate by paternal affection; “ do thy worst. My daughter is my flesh and blood, dearer to me a thousand times than those limbs which thy cruelty threatens. Take my life if thou wilt, and say the Jew, amid his tortures, knew how to disappoint the Christian.”

“ We shall see that,” said Front-de-Bœuf; “ for by the blessed rood, thou shalt feel the extremities of fire and steel! — Strip him, slaves, and chain him down upon the bars.”

In spite of the feeble struggles of the old man, the Saracens had already torn from him his upper garment, and were proceeding totally to disrobe him, when the sound of a bugle, thrice winded without the castle, penetrated even to the recesses of the dungeon, and immediately after loud voices were heard calling for Sir Reginald Front-de-Bœuf. Unwilling to be found engaged in his hellish occupation, the savage Baron gave the slaves a signal to restore Isaac’s garment, and, quitting the dungeon with his attendants, he left the Jew to thank God for his own deliverance, or to lament over his daughter’s captivity, as his personal or parental feelings might prove strongest.



## CHAPTER XX

### • HOW DE BRACY MADE LOVE

THE apartment to which the Lady Rowena had been introduced was fitted up with some rude attempts at ornament and magnificence. Here she was left to meditate upon her fate, until the actors in this nefarious drama had arranged the several parts which each of them was to perform. This had been settled in a council held by Front-de-Bœuf, De Bracy, and the Templar, in which they had at length determined the fate of their unhappy prisoners.

It was about the hour of noon, therefore, when De Bracy appeared to prosecute his views upon the hand and possessions of the Lady Rowena.

The interval had not entirely been bestowed in holding council with his confederates, for De Bracy had found leisure to decorate his person with all the foppery of the times. He saluted Rowena by doffing his velvet bonnet. With this, he gently motioned the lady to a seat; and, as she still retained her standing posture, the knight ungloved his right hand, and motioned to conduct her thither. But Rowena declined, by her gesture, the proffered compliment, and replied: “If I be in the presence of my jailer, Sir Knight, it best becomes his prisoner to remain standing till she learns her doom.”

“Alas! fair Rowena,” returned De Bracy, “you are in presence of your captive, not your jailer; and it is



from your fair eyes that De Bracy must receive that doom which you fondly expect from him."

"I know you not, sir," said the lady, drawing herself up with all the pride of offended rank and beauty; "and the insolent familiarity with which you apply to me the jargon of a troubadour forms no apology for the violence of a robber."

"That I am unknown to you," said De Bracy, "is indeed my misfortune; yet let me hope that De Bracy's name has not been always unspoken when minstrels or heralds have praised deeds of chivalry."

"To heralds and to minstrels, then, leave thy praise, Sir Knight," replied Rowena; "and tell me which of them shall record in song, or in book of tourney, the memorable conquest of this night, a conquest obtained over an old man, followed by a few timid hinds; and its booty, an unfortunate maiden transported against her will to the castle of a robber?"

"You are unjust, Lady Rowena," said the knight, biting his lips in some confusion; "yourself free from passion, you can allow no excuse for the frenzy of another, although caused by your own beauty."

"I pray you, Sir Knight," said Rowena, "to cease a language so commonly used by strolling minstrels that it becomes not the mouth of knights or nobles. Certes, you constrain me to sit down, since you enter upon such commonplace terms."

"Proud damsel," said De Bracy, incensed at finding his gallant style procured him nothing but contempt, "proud damsel, thou shalt be as proudly encountered. It is meeter for thy humor to be wooed with bow and bill than in set terms and in courtly language."

"Courtesy of tongue," said Rowena, "when it is used to veil churlishness of deed, is but a knight's girdle



around the breast of a base clown. I wonder not that the restraint appears to gall you — more it were for your honor to have retained the dress and language of an outlaw than to veil the deeds of one under an affectation of gentle language and demeanor.”

“ You counsel well, lady,” said the Norman; “ and in the bold language which best justifies bold action, I tell thee, thou shalt never leave this castle, or thou shalt leave it as Maurice de Bracy’s wife. I am not wont to be baffled in my enterprises, nor needs a Norman noble scrupulously to vindicate his conduct to a Saxon maiden whom he distinguishes by the offer of his hand. How else wouldst thou escape from the mean precincts of a country grange, where Saxons herd with the swine which form their wealth, to take thy seat, honored as thou shouldst be, and shalt be, amid all in England that is distinguished by beauty or dignified by power? ”

“ Sir Knight,” replied Rowena, “ the grange which you contemn hath been my shelter from infancy; and, trust me, when I leave it — should that day ever arrive — it shall be with one who has not learned to despise the dwelling and manners in which I have been brought up.”

“ I guess your meaning, lady,” said De Bracy. “ But dream not that Richard Cœur-de-Lion will ever resume his throne, far less that Wilfred of Ivanhoe, his minion, will ever lead thee to his footstool, to be there welcomed as the bride of a favorite. Know, lady, that this rival is in my power, and that it rests but with me to betray the secret of his being within the castle to Front-de-Bœuf, whose jealousy will be more fatal than mine.”

“ Wilfred here! ” said Rowena, in disdain; “ that is as true as that Front-de-Bœuf is his rival.”

De Bracy looked at her steadily for an instant.



“Wert thou really ignorant of this?” said he; “didst thou not know that Wilfred of Ivanhoe traveled in the litter of the Jew? — a meet conveyance for the crusader whose doughty arm was to reconquer the Holy Sepulcher!” And he laughed scornfully.

“And if he is here,” said Rowena, compelling herself to a tone of indifference, though trembling with an agony of apprehension which she could not suppress, “in what is he the rival of Front-de-Bœuf? or what has he to fear beyond a short imprisonment and an honorable ransom, according to the use of chivalry?”

“Rowena,” said De Bracy, “knowest thou not there is a jealousy of ambition and of wealth, as well as of love; and that this our host, Front-de-Bœuf, will push from his road him who opposes his claim to the fair barony of Ivanhoe?”

“Save him, for the love of Heaven!” said Rowena, her firmness giving way under terror for her lover’s impending fate.

“I can — I will — it is my purpose,” said De Bracy; “but it is thy love must buy his protection. Thy lover lies wounded in this castle — thy preferred lover. He is a bar betwixt Front-de-Bœuf and that which Front-de-Bœuf loves better than either ambition or beauty. What will it cost beyond the blow of a poniard, or the thrust of a javelin, to silence his opposition forever? Nay, were Front-de-Bœuf afraid to justify a deed so open, let the leech but give his patient a wrong draught, let the chamberlain, or the nurse who tends him, but pluck the pillow from his head, and Wilfred, in his present condition, is sped without the effusion of blood.”

Hitherto Rowena had sustained her part in this trying scene with undismayed courage; but when her eyes were opened to the extent of her own danger, as well as



that of her lover and her guardian; and when she found her will, the slightest expression of which was wont to command respect and attention, now placed in opposition to that of a man of a strong, fierce, and determined mind, who possessed the advantage over her, and was resolved to use it, she quailed before him.

After casting her eyes around, as if to look for the aid which was nowhere to be found, and after a few broken interjections, she raised her hands to heaven, and burst into a passion of uncontrolled vexation and sorrow. It was impossible to see so beautiful a creature in such extremity without feeling for her, and De Bracy was not unmoved, though he was yet more embarrassed than touched. He had, in truth, gone too far to recede; and yet, in Rowena's present condition, she could not be acted on either by argument or threats. He paced the apartment to and fro, now vainly exhorting the terrified maiden to compose herself, now hesitating concerning his own line of conduct.

Agitated by these thoughts, he could only bid the unfortunate Rowena be comforted, and assure her that as yet she had no reason for the excess of despair to which she was now giving way. But in this task of consolation De Bracy was interrupted by the horn, "hoarse-winded blowing far and keen," which had at the same time alarmed the other inmates of the castle. Of them all, perhaps, De Bracy least regretted the interruption; for his conference with the Lady Rowena had arrived at a point where he found it equally difficult to prosecute or to resign his enterprise.



## CHAPTER XXI

### THE JEWESS AND THE TEMPLAR

WHILE the scenes we have described were passing in other parts of the castle, the Jewess Rebecca awaited her fate in a distant and sequestered turret. On being thrust into the little cell, she found herself in the presence of an old sibyl, who kept murmuring to herself a Saxon rhyme, as if to beat time to the revolving dance which her spindle was performing upon the floor.

“What devil’s deed have they now in the wind?” said the old hag, murmuring to herself, yet from time to time casting a sidelong and malignant glance at Rebecca; “but it is easy to guess. Bright eyes, black locks, and a skin like paper. Outlandish, too,” she said, marking the dress and turban of Rebecca. “What country art thou of?—a Saracen or an Egyptian? Why dost not answer? Thou canst weep, canst thou not speak?”

“Be not angry, good mother,” said Rebecca.

“Thou needst say no more,” replied Ulrica; “men know a fox by the train, and a Jewess by her tongue.”

“For the sake of mercy,” said Rebecca, “tell me what I am to expect as the conclusion of the violence which hath dragged me hither! Is it my life they seek, to atone for my religion? I will lay it down cheerfully.”

“Thy life, minion!” answered the sibyl; “what would taking thy life pleasure them?—trust me, thy



life is in no peril. Look at me — I was as young and twice as fair as thou, when Front-de-Bœuf, father of this Reginald, and his Normans, stormed this castle. My father and his seven sons defended their inheritance from story to story, from chamber to chamber. There was not a room, not a step of the stair, that was not slippery with their blood. They died — they died every man; and ere their bodies were cold, and ere their blood was dried, I had become the prey and the scorn of the conqueror! ”

“ Is there no help? — are there no means of escape? ” said Rebecca. “ Richly, richly would I requite thine aid.”

“ Think not of it,” said the hag; “ from hence there is no escape but through the gates of death. Fare thee well, Jewess! — Jew or Gentile, thy fate would be the same; for thou hast to do with them that have neither scruple nor pity.”

“ Stay! stay! for Heaven’s sake! ” said Rebecca, “ stay, though it be to curse and to revile me — thy presence is yet some protection.”

“ The presence of the mother of God were no protection,” answered the old woman. “ There she stands,” pointing to a rude image of the Virgin Mary; “ see if she can avert the fate that awaits thee.”

Rebecca was now to expect a fate even more dreadful than that of Rowena. Yet had the Jewess this advantage, that she was better prepared by habits of thought, and by natural strength of mind, to encounter danger. From her father’s example and injunctions, Rebecca had learned to bear herself courteously towards all who approached her. Prepared to expect adverse circumstances, she had acquired the firmness necessary for acting under them. Her present situation required all



her presence of mind, and she summoned it up accordingly.

Her first care was to inspect the apartment; but it afforded few hopes either of escape or protection. The door had no inside bolt or bar. The single window opened upon an embattled space surmounting the turret, which had no communication with any other part of the battlements, being an isolated balcony. There was therefore no hope but in passive fortitude, and in that strong reliance on Heaven natural to great and generous characters.

The prisoner trembled, however, and changed color, when a step was heard on the stair, and the door of the turret-chamber slowly opened, and a tall man, dressed as one of those banditti to whom they owed their misfortune, slowly entered, and shut the door behind him. His cap, pulled down upon his brows, concealed the upper part of his face, and he held his mantle in such a manner as to muffle the rest. Rebecca, making an effort upon herself, had time to anticipate his explanation. She had already unclasped two costly bracelets and a collar, which she hastened to proffer to the supposed outlaw, concluding naturally that to gratify his avarice was to bespeak his favor.

“Take these,” she said, “good friend, and for God’s sake be merciful to me and my aged father. These ornaments are of value, yet are they trifling to what he would bestow to obtain our dismissal from this castle free and uninjured.”

“It is well spoken,” replied the outlaw in French; “but know, bright lily of the vale of Baca! that thy father is already in the hands of a powerful alchemist, who knows how to convert into gold and silver even the rusty bars of a dungeon grate. The venerable Isaac is



subjected to an alembic which will distill from him all he holds dear, without any assistance from my requests or thy entreaty."

"Thou art no outlaw," said Rebecca, in the same language in which he addressed her; "no outlaw had refused such offers. No outlaw in this land uses the dialect in which thou hast spoken. Thou art no outlaw, but a Norman — a Norman, noble perhaps in birth. Oh, be so in thy actions, and cast off this fearful mask of outrage and violence!"

"And thou, who canst guess so truly," said Brian de Bois-Guilbert, dropping the mantle from his face, "art no true daughter of Israel, but in all save youth and beauty a very witch of Endor."

"What wouldst thou have of me," said Rebecca, "if not my wealth? — We can have nought in common between us — you are a Christian — I am a Jewess."

"Thou art keen-witted, Jewess," replied the Templar. "One thing only can save thee, Rebecca. Submit to thy fate, embrace our religion, and thou shalt go forth in such state that many a Norman lady shall yield as well in pomp as in beauty to the favorite of the best lance among the defenders of the Temple."

"Submit to my fate!" said Rebecca; "and, sacred Heaven! to what fate! — embrace thy religion! and what religion can it be that harbors such a villain? — *thou* the best lance of the Templars! — craven knight! — forsworn priest! I spit at thee, and I defy thee. — The God of Abraham hath opened an escape to his daughter — even from this abyss of infamy!"

As she spoke, she threw open the latticed window which led to the balcony, and, in an instant after, stood on the very verge of the parapet, with not the slightest screen between her and the tremendous depth below.



Unprepared for such a desperate effort, for she had hitherto stood perfectly motionless, Bois-Guilbert had time neither to intercept nor to stop her. As he offered to advance, she exclaimed, “Remain where thou art, proud Templar, or at thy choice advance!—one foot nearer, and I plunge myself from the precipice.”

As she spoke this, she clasped her hands and extended them towards heaven, as if imploring mercy on her soul before she made the final plunge. The Templar hesitated, and a resolution which had never yielded to pity or distress gave way to his admiration of her fortitude. “Come down,” he said, “rash girl!—I swear by earth, and sea, and sky, I will offer thee no offense. Many a law, many a commandment have I broken, but my word never.”

“I will then trust thee,” said Rebecca, “thus far;” and she descended from the verge of the battlement, but remained standing close by one of the embrasures. “Here,” she said, “I take my stand. Remain where thou art.”

While Rebecca spoke thus, her high and firm resolve, which corresponded so well with the expressive beauty of her countenance, gave to her looks, air, and manner a dignity that seemed more than mortal. The thought that she had her fate at her command gave a deeper color to her complexion, and a yet more brilliant fire to her eye. Bois-Guilbert, proud himself and high-spirited, thought he had never beheld beauty so animated and commanding.

“Let there be peace between us, Rebecca,” he said. “She who could prefer death to dishonor must have a proud and powerful soul. Mine thou must be!—Nay, start not,” he added, “it must be with thine own consent, and on thine own terms. Thou must



consent to share with me hopes more extended than can be viewed from the throne of a monarch! Hear me ere you answer, and judge ere you refuse. The Templar loses his social rights, his power of free agency, but he becomes a member of a mighty body, before which thrones already tremble. Of this mighty Order I am no mean member, but already one of the Chief Commanders, and may well aspire one day to hold the baton of Grand Master. But that bugle-sound announces something which may require my presence. Think on what I have said.—Farewell—I will soon return, and hold further conference with thee.”



## CHAPTER XXII

### A FORMAL LETTER OF DEFIANCE

WHEN the Templar reached the hall of the castle, he found De Bracy already there. "Your love-suit," said De Bracy, "hath, I suppose, been disturbed, like mine, by this obstreperous summons. By the bones of Thomas à Becket, the Lady Rowena must have heard that I cannot endure the sight of women's tears."

"Away!" said the Templar; "thou a leader of a Free Company, and regard a woman's tears! A few drops sprinkled on the torch of love make the flame blaze the brighter."

"Many thanks for the few drops of thy sprinkling," replied De Bracy; "but this damsel hath wept enough to extinguish a beacon-light. Never was such wringing of hands and such overflowing of eyes since the days of St. Niobe, of whom Prior Aymer told us. A water-fiend hath possessed the fair Saxon."

They were soon after joined by Front-de-Bœuf, who had been disturbed in the manner with which the reader is acquainted, and had only tarried to give some necessary directions. "Let us see the cause of this cursed clamor," said Front-de-Bœuf; "here is a letter, and, if I mistake not, it is in Saxon."

He looked at it, turning it round and round as if he had really some hopes of coming at the meaning by inverting the position of the paper, and then handed it to De Bracy.



“ It may be magic spells for aught I know,” said De Bracy.

“ Give it me,” said the Templar. “ We have that of the priestly character, that we have some knowledge to enlighten our valor.”

“ Let us profit by your most reverend knowledge, then,” said De Bracy; “ what says the scroll? ”

“ It is a formal letter of defiance,” answered the Templar; “ but, by our Lady of Bethlehem, if it be not a foolish jest, it is the most extraordinary cartel that ever was sent across the drawbridge of a baronial castle.”

“ Jest! ” said Front-de-Bœuf, “ I would gladly know who dares jest with me in such a matter.— Read it, Sir Brian.”

The Templar accordingly read it as follows:—

“ I, Wamba, the son of Witless, jester to a noble and freeborn man, Cedric of Rotherwood, called the Saxon: and I, Gurth, the son of Beowulph, swineherd —”

“ Thou art mad,” said Front-de-Bœuf, interrupting the reader.

“ By St. Luke, it is so set down,” answered the Templar. Then, resuming his task, he went on,—

“ I, Gurth, the son of Beowulph, swineherd unto the said Cedric, with the assistance of our allies and confederates, who make common cause with us in this our feud, namely, the good knight, called for the present the Black Sluggard, and the stout yeoman, Robert Locksley, called Cleave-the-Wand, to you, Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, and your allies and accomplices whomsoever, to wit, that whereas you have, without cause given or feud declared, wrongfully and by mastery



seized upon the person of our lord and master the said Cedric; also upon the person of a noble and freeborn damsel, the Lady Rowena of Hargottstandstede; also upon the person of a noble and freeborn man, Athelstane of Coningsburgh; also upon the persons of certain freeborn men, their attendants; also upon certain serfs, their born bondsmen; also upon a certain Jew, named Isaac of York, together with his daughter, a Jewess, and certain horses and mules: which noble persons, with their attendants and slaves, and also with the horses and mules, Jew and Jewess before said, were all in peace with his Majesty, and traveling as liege subjects upon the king's highway; therefore we require and demand that the said noble persons, namely, Cedric of Rotherwood, Rowena of Hargottstandstede, Athelstane of Coningsburgh, with their servants, attendants, and followers, also the horses and mules, Jew and Jewess aforesaid, together with all goods and chattels to them pertaining, be, within an hour after the delivery hereof, delivered to us, or to those whom we shall appoint to receive the same, and that untouched and unharmed in body and goods. Failing of which, we do pronounce to you, that we hold ye as robbers and traitors, and will wager our bodies against ye in battle, siege, or otherwise, and do our utmost to your annoyance and destruction. Wherefore may God have you in His keeping.—Signed by us upon the eve of St. Withold's day, under the great trysting oak in the Harthill Walk, the above being written by a holy man, clerk to God, our Lady, and St. Dunstan, in the chapel of Copmanhurst."

At the bottom of this document was scrawled, in the first place, a rude sketch of a cock's head and comb, with a legend expressing this hieroglyphic to be the sign-



manual of Wamba, son of Witless. Under this respectable emblem stood a cross, stated to be the mark of Gurth, the son of Beowulph. Then was written, in rough, bold characters, the words, The Black Sluggard. And, to conclude the whole, an arrow, neatly enough drawn, was described as the mark of the yeoman, Locksley.

The knights heard this uncommon document read from end to end, and then gazed upon each other in silent amazement. De Bracy was the first to break silence, by an uncontrollable fit of laughter, wherein he was joined, though with more moderation, by the Templar. Front-de-Bœuf, on the contrary, seemed impatient of their ill-timed jocularities.

“ I give you plain warning,” he said, “ fair sirs, that you had better consult how to bear yourselves under these circumstances, than give way to such misplaced merriment.”

“ Front-de-Bœuf has not recovered his temper since his late overthrow,” said De Bracy to the Templar; “ he is cowed at the very idea of a cartel, though it come but from a fool and a swineherd.”

“ By St. Michael,” answered Front-de-Bœuf, “ I would thou couldst stand the whole brunt of this adventure thyself, De Bracy. These fellows dared not have acted with such inconceivable impudence, had they not been supported by some strong bands. There are enough outlaws in this forest to resent my protecting the deer. I did but tie one fellow, who was taken red-handed and in the fact, to the horns of a wild stag, which gored him to death in five minutes, and I had as many arrows shot at me as there were launched against yonder target at Ashby.— Here, fellow,” he added, to one of his attendants, “ hast thou sent out to see by what force this precious challenge is to be supported? ”



“ There are at least two hundred men assembled in the woods,” answered the squire.

“ Here is a proper matter! ” said Front-de-Bœuf; “ this comes of lending you the use of my castle, that cannot manage your undertaking quietly, but you must bring this nest of hornets about my ears! ”

“ Of hornets! ” said De Bracy; “ of stingless drones rather; a band of lazy knaves, who take to the wood and destroy the venison rather than labor for their maintenance! ”

“ Stingless! ” replied Front-de-Bœuf; “ fork-headed shafts of a cloth-yard in length, and these shot within the breadth of a French crown, are sting enough.”

“ For shame, Sir Knight! ” said the Templar. “ Let us summon our people and sally forth upon them. One knight — aye, one man-at-arms—were enough for twenty such peasants.”

“ Enough, and too much,” said De Bracy; “ I should only be ashamed to couch lance against them.”

“ True,” answered Front-de-Bœuf; “ were they black Turks or Moors, Sir Templar, or the craven peasants of France, most valiant De Bracy; but these are English yeomen, over whom we shall have no advantage, save what we may derive from our arms and horses, which will avail us little in the glades of the forest. Sally, saidst thou? We have scarce men enough to defend the castle. The best of mine are at York; so is all your band, De Bracy; and we have scarcely twenty, besides the handful that were engaged in this mad business.”

“ Thou dost not fear,” said the Templar, “ that they can assemble in force sufficient to attempt the castle? ”

“ Not so, Sir Brian,” answered Front-de-Bœuf. “ These outlaws have indeed a daring captain; but with-



out machines, scaling ladders, and experienced leaders, my castle may defy them."

"Send to thy neighbors," said the Templar; "let them assemble their people and come to the rescue of three knights, besieged by a jester and a swineherd in the baronial castle of Reginald Front-de-Bœuf!"

"You jest, Sir Knight," answered the baron; "but to whom should I send? Malvoisin is by this time at York with his retainers, and so are my other allies; and so should I have been, but for this infernal enterprise."

"Then send to York and recall our people," said De Bracy. "If they abide the shaking of my standard, or the sight of my Free Companions, I will give them credit for the boldest outlaws ever bent bow in greenwood."

"And who shall bear such a message?" said Front-de-Bœuf; "they will beset every path, and rip the errand out of his bosom.—I have it," he added, after pausing for a moment. "Sir Templar, thou canst write as well as read; thou shalt return an answer to this bold challenge."

"I would rather do it at the sword's point than at that of the pen," said Bois-Guilbert; "but be it as you will."

He sat down accordingly, and indicted, in the French language, an epistle of the following tenor:

"Sir Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, with his noble and knightly allies and confederates, receives no defiances at the hands of slaves, bondsmen, or fugitives. If the person calling himself the Black Knight have indeed a claim to the honors of chivalry, he ought to know that he stands degraded by his present association, and has no right to ask reckoning at the hands of good men of noble blood. Touching the prisoners we have made, we do in Christian charity require you to send a man of religion to



receive their confession and reconcile them with God; since it is our fixed intention to execute them to-morrow morning before noon, so that their heads, being placed on the battlements, shall show to all men how lightly we esteem those who have bestirred themselves in their rescue. Wherefore, as above, we require you to send a priest to reconcile them to God, in doing which you shall render them the last earthly service.”

This letter, being folded, was delivered to the squire, and by him to the messenger who waited without, as the answer to that which he had brought.

The yeoman returned to the headquarters of the allies, which were for the present established under a venerable oak tree, about three arrow-flights distant from the castle. Here Wamba and Gurth, with their allies the Black Knight and Locksley, and the jovial hermit, awaited with impatience an answer to their summons. Around and at a distance from them were seen many a bold yeoman, whose silvan dress and weatherbeaten countenances showed the ordinary nature of their occupation. More than two hundred had already assembled, and others were fast coming in. Those whom they obeyed as leaders were distinguished from the others only by a feather in the cap, their dress, arms, and equipments being in all other respects the same.

Besides these bands, a less orderly and worse-armed force, consisting of the Saxon inhabitants of the neighboring township, as well as many bondsmen and servants from Cedric's extensive estate, had already arrived. Few of these were armed otherwise than with such rustic weapons as necessity sometimes converts to military purposes. Boar-spears, scythes, flails, and the like, were their chief arms. To the leaders of this



motley army the letter of the Templar was now delivered.

Reference was at first made to the chaplain for an exposition of its contents.

“By the crook of St. Dunstan,” said that worthy ecclesiastic, “I cannot expound unto you this jargon, which, whether it be French or Arabic, is beyond my guess.”

“I must be clerk, then,” said the Black Knight; and, taking the letter from Locksley, he first read it over to himself, and then explained the meaning in Saxon.

“Execute the noble Cedric?” exclaimed Wamba; “by the rood, thou must be mistaken, Sir Knight.”

“Not I, my worthy friend,” replied the knight, “I have explained the words as they are here set down.”

“Then by St. Thomas of Canterbury,” replied Gurth, “we will have the castle, should we tear it down with our hands!”

“’Tis but a contrivance to gain time,” said Locksley; “they dare not do a deed for which I could exact a fearful penalty.”

“I would,” said the Black Knight, “there were some one among us who could obtain admission into the castle, and discover how the case stands with the besieged. Methinks, as they require a confessor to be sent, this holy hermit might at once exercise his pious vocation, and procure us the information we desire.”

“A plague on thee and thy advice!” said the pious hermit; “I tell thee, Sir Slothful Knight, that when I doff my friar’s frock, my priesthood, my sanctity, my very Latin, are put off along with it; and when in my green jerkin, I can better kill twenty deer than confess one Christian.”

“I fear,” said the Black Knight—“I fear greatly



there is no one here that is qualified to take upon him, for the nonce, this same character of father confessor? ”

All looked on each other, and were silent.

“ I see,” said Wamba, after a short pause, “ that the fool must be still the fool, and put his neck in the venture which wise men shrink from. You must know, my dear cousins and countrymen, that I wore russet before I wore motley, and was bred to be a friar, until a brain-fever came upon me and left me just enough wit to be a fool. I trust, with the assistance of the good hermit’s frock, together with the priesthood, sanctity, and learning which are stitched into the cowl of it, I shall be found qualified to administer both worldly and ghostly comfort to our worthy master Cedric and his companions in adversity.”

“ Hath he sense enough, thinkest thou? ” said the Black Knight, addressing Gurth.

“ I know not,” said Gurth; “ but if he hath not, it will be the first time he hath wanted wit to turn his folly to account.”

“ On with the frock, then, good fellow,” quoth the Knight, “ and let thy master send us an account of their situation within the castle. Their numbers must be few, and it is five to one they may be accessible by a sudden and bold attack. Time wears—away with thee.”

“ And, in the meantime,” said Locksley, “ we will beset the place so closely that not so much as a fly shall carry news from thence. So that, my good friend,” he continued, addressing Wamba, “ thou mayst assure these tyrants that whatever violence they exercise on the persons of their prisoners shall be most severely repaid upon their own.”



“Peace be with you,” said Wamba, who was now muffled in his religious disguise.

And so saying, he imitated the solemn and stately deportment of a friar, and departed to execute his mission.



## CHAPTER XXIII

“ PEACE BE WITH YOU ”

WHEN the Jester, arrayed in the cowl and frock of the hermit, and having his knotted cord twisted round his middle, stood before the portal of the castle of Front-de-Bœuf, the warder demanded of him his name and errand.

“ Peace be with you,” answered the Jester; “ I am a poor brother of the Order of St. Francis, who come hither to do my office to certain unhappy prisoners now secured within this castle.”

“ Thou art a bold friar,” said the warder, “ to come hither, where, saving our own drunken confessor, a cock of thy feather hath not crowed these twenty years.”

“ Yet, I pray thee, do mine errand to the lord of the castle,” answered the pretended friar; “ trust me, it will find good acceptance with him, and the cock shall crow, that the whole castle shall hear him.”

“ Thanks,” said the warder; “ but if I come to shame for leaving my post upon thine errand, I will try whether a friar’s gray gown be proof against a gray-goose shaft.”

With this threat he left his turret, and carried to the hall of the castle his unwonted intelligence, that a holy friar stood before the gate and demanded instant admission. With no small wonder he received his master’s commands to admit the holy man immediately. The hairbrained self-conceit which had emboldened Wamba



to undertake this dangerous office was scarce sufficient to support him when he found himself in the presence of Front-de-Bœuf, and he brought out his “Peace be with you,” to which he, in a good measure, trusted for supporting his character, with more anxiety and hesitation that had hitherto accompanied it. But Front-de-Bœuf was accustomed to see men of all ranks tremble in his presence, so that the timidity of the supposed father did not give him any cause of suspicion. “Who and whence art thou, priest?” said he.

“Peace be with you,” reiterated the Jester; “I am a poor servant of St. Francis, who, traveling through this wilderness, have fallen among thieves, as Scripture hath it, which thieves have sent me unto this castle in order to do my ghostly office on two persons condemned by your honorable justice.”

“Aye, right,” answered Front-de-Bœuf; “and canst thou tell me, holy father, the number of those banditti?”

“Gallant sir,” answered the Jester, “their name is legion.”

“Tell me in plain terms what numbers there are, or, priest, thy cloak and cord will ill protect thee.”

“Alas!” said the supposed friar, “I was like to burst with fear! but I conceive they may be, what of yeomen, what of commons, at least five hundred men.”

“What!” said the Templar, “muster the wasps so thick here? It is time to stifle such a mischievous brood.” Then, taking Front-de-Bœuf aside, “Knowest thou the priest?”

“He is a stranger from a distant convent,” said Front-de-Bœuf; “I know him not.”

“Then trust him not with thy purpose in words,” answered the Templar. “Let him carry a written order to De Bracy’s company of Free Companions, to repair



instantly to their master's aid. In the meantime, and that the monk may suspect nothing, permit him to go freely about his task of preparing these Saxon hogs for the slaughter-house."

"It shall be so," said Front-de-Bœuf. And he forthwith appointed a domestic to conduct Wamba to the apartment where Cedric and Athelstane were confined.

"Peace be with you," said the Jester, entering the apartment; "the blessing of St. Dunstan, St. Denis, St. Duthoc, and all other saints whatsoever, be upon ye and about ye."

"Enter freely," answered Cedric to the supposed friar; "with what intent art thou come hither?"

"To bid you prepare yourselves for death," answered the Jester.

"It is impossible!" replied Cedric, starting. "Fearless and wicked as they are, they dare not attempt such open and gratuitous cruelty!"

"Alas!" said the Jester, "to restrain them by their sense of humanity is the same as to stop a runaway horse with a bridle of silk thread. Bethink thee, therefore, noble Cedric, and you also, gallant Athelstane, what crimes you have committed in the flesh; for to-morrow will ye be called to answer to a higher tribunal."

"Hearest thou this, Athelstane?" said Cedric. "We must rouse up our hearts to this last action, since better it is we should die like men than live like slaves."

"I am ready," answered Athelstane, "to stand the worst of their malice, and shall walk to my death with as much composure as ever I did to my dinner."

"Let us, then, unto our holy gear, father," said Cedric.

"Wait yet a moment, good uncle," said the Jester, in



his natural tone; “better look long before you leap in the dark.”

“By my faith,” said Cedric, “I should know that voice!”

“It is that of your trusty slave and jester,” answered Wamba, throwing back his cowl. “Had you taken a fool’s advice formerly, you would not have been here at all. Take a fool’s advice now, and you will not be here long.”

“How mean’st thou, knave?” answered the Saxon.

“Even thus,” replied Wamba; “take thou this frock and cord, which are all the orders I ever had, and march quietly out of the castle, leaving me your cloak and girdle to take the long leap in thy stead.”

“Leave thee in my stead!” said Cedric, astonished at the proposal; “why, they would hang thee, my poor knave.”

“E’en let them do as they are permitted,” said Wamba.

“Well, Wamba,” answered Cedric, “for one thing will I grant thy request. And that is, if thou wilt make the exchange of garments with Lord Athelstane instead of me.”

“Not so, father Cedric,” said Athelstane, grasping his hand — for, when roused to think or act, his deeds and sentiments were not unbecoming his high race — “not so,” he continued; “I would rather remain in this hall a week without food save the prisoner’s stinted loaf, or drink save the prisoner’s measure of water, than embrace the opportunity to escape which the slave’s untaught kindness has purveyed for his master.”

“You are called wise men, sirs,” said the Jester, “and I a crazed fool; but, uncle Cedric and cousin Athelstane, the fool shall decide this controversy for ye, and save ye



the trouble of straining courtesies any farther. I am like John-a-Duck's mare, that will let no man mount her but John-a-Duck. I came to save my master, and if he will not consent, why, I can but go away home again. Kind service cannot be chucked from hand to hand like a shuttle-cock. I'll hang for no man but my own born master."

"Go, then, noble Cedric," said Athelstane, "neglect not this opportunity. Your presence without may encourage friends to our rescue."

"And is there any prospect, then, of rescue from without?" said Cedric, looking at the Jester.

"Prospect, indeed!" echoed Wamba; "let me tell you, when you fill my cloak, you are wrapped in a general's cassock. Five hundred men are there without, and I was this morning one of their chief leaders. My fool's cap was a casque, and my bauble a truncheon. Well, we shall see what good they will make by exchanging a fool for a wise man. Truly, I fear they will lose in valor what they may gain in discretion. And so farewell, master, and be kind to poor Gurth and his dog Fangs; and let my cockscomb hang in the hall at Rotherwood, in memory that I flung away my life for my master, like a faithful — fool." The last word came out with a sort of double expression, betwixt jest and earnest.

The tears stood in Cedric's eyes. "Thy memory shall be preserved," he said, "while fidelity and affection have honor upon earth! But that I trust I shall find the means of saving Rowena, and thee, Athelstane, and thee also, my poor Wamba, thou shouldst not overbear me in this matter."

The exchange of dress was now accomplished, when a sudden doubt struck Cedric.

"I know no language," he said, "but my own, and a



few words of their mincing Norman. How shall I bear myself like a reverend brother? ”

“ The spell lies in four words,” replied Wamba. “ ‘ Peace be with you ’ will answer all inquiries. If you go or come, eat or drink, bless or ban, ‘ Peace be with you ’ carries you through it all. Speak it but thus, in a deep, grave tone — ‘ Peace be with you ’ — it is irresistible. Watch and ward, knight and squire, foot and horse, it acts as a charm upon them all.”

“ If such prove the case,” said his master, “ my religious orders are soon taken — ‘ Peace be with you.’ I trust I shall remember the password. — Noble Athelstane, farewell; and farewell, my poor boy, whose heart might make amends for a weaker head; I will save you, or return and die with you. The royal blood of our Saxon kings shall not be spilt while mine beats in my veins; nor shall one hair fall from the head of the kind knave who risked himself for his master, if Cedric’s peril can prevent it. — Farewell.”

“ Farewell, noble Cedric,” said Athelstane; “ remember, it is the true part of a friar to accept refreshment, if you are offered any.”

“ Farewell, uncle,” added Wamba; “ and remember ‘ Peace be with you.’ ”

Thus exhorted, Cedric sallied forth upon his expedition; and it was not long ere he had occasion to try the force of that spell which his Jester had recommended as omnipotent. In a low-arched and dusky passage, by which he endeavored to work his way to the hall of the castle, he was interrupted by a female form.

“ Peace be with you! ” said the pseudo friar, and was endeavoring to hurry past, when a soft voice replied, “ And with you, reverend father — ”

“ I am somewhat deaf,” replied Cedric, and at the



same time muttered to himself, "A curse on the fool and his 'Peace be with you'! I have lost my javelin at the first cast."

"I pray you of dear love, reverend father," replied the person who had addressed him, "that you will deign to visit with your ghostly comfort a wounded prisoner of this castle, and have such compassion upon him and us as thy holy office teaches.—Never shall good deed so highly advantage thy convent."

"Daughter," answered Cedric, much embarrassed, "my time in this castle will not permit me to exercise the duties of mine office. I must presently forth — there is life and death upon my speed."

"Yet, father, let me entreat you by the vow you have taken on you," replied the suppliant, "not to leave the oppressed and endangered without counsel or succor."

"May the fiend fly away with me, and leave me in Ifrin with the souls of Odin and Thor!" answered Cedric, impatiently, and would probably have proceeded in the same tone of total departure from his spiritual character, when the colloquy was interrupted by the harsh voice of Ulrica, the old crone of the turret.

"How, minion?" said she to the female speaker, "is this the manner in which you requite the kindness which permitted thee to leave thy prison-cell yonder?—Puttest thou the reverend man to use ungracious language to free himself from the importunities of a Jewess?"

"A Jewess!" said Cedric, availing himself of the information to get clear of their interruption. "Let me pass, woman! stop me not at your peril. I am fresh from my holy office, and would avoid pollution."

"Come this way, father," said the old hag, "thou art a stranger in this castle, and canst not leave it without a guide. Come thither, for I would speak with thee.—



And you, daughter of an accursed race, go to the sick man's chamber, and tend him until my return; and woe betide you if you again quit it without my permission!”

Rebecca retreated. Her importunities had prevailed upon Ulrica to suffer her to quit the turret, and Ulrica had employed her services where she herself would most gladly have paid them, by the bedside of the wounded Ivanhoe. With an understanding awake to their dangerous situation, and prompt to avail herself of each means of safety which occurred, Rebecca had hoped something from the presence of a man of religion, who, she learned from Ulrica, had penetrated into this godless castle. She watched the return of the supposed ecclesiastic, with the purpose of addressing him and interesting him in favor of the prisoners; with what imperfect success the reader has been just acquainted.



## CHAPTER XXIV

“ TO THE BATTLEMENTS ! ”

ULRICA conducted the unwilling Cedric into a small apartment, the door of which she heedfully secured, and said, in a tone rather asserting a fact than asking a question, “ Thou art Saxon, father.— Deny it not,” she continued, observing that Cedric hastened not to reply ; “ the sounds of my native language are sweet to mine ears, though seldom heard save from the tongues of the wretched and degraded serfs on whom the proud Normans impose the meanest drudgery of this dwelling. Thou art a Saxon, father — a Saxon, and, save as thou art a servant of God, a freeman.

“ I was not born,” she continued, “ the wretch that thou now seest me. I was free, was happy, was honored, loved, and was beloved. I am now a slave, miserable and degraded. Dost thou wonder, father, that I should hate mankind, and, above all, the race that has wrought this change in me ? Can the wrinkled, decrepit hag before thee forget she was once the daughter of the noble thane of Torquilstone, before whose frown a thousand vassals trembled ? ”

“ Thou the daughter of Torquil Wolfgang ! ” said Cedric, receding as he spoke ; “ thou — thou — the daughter of that noble Saxon, my father’s friend and companion in arms ! ”

“ Thy father’s friend ! ” echoed Ulrica ; “ then Cedric called the Saxon stands before me, for the noble Here-



ward of Rotherwood had but one son, whose name is well known among his countrymen.— Even within these accursed walls has the name of Cedric been sounded — and I, wretched and degraded, have rejoiced to think that there yet breathed an avenger of our unhappy nation. I also have had my hours of vengeance — I have fomented the quarrels of our foes, and heated drunken revelry into murderous broil — I have seen their blood flow — I have heard their dying groans! Go thy way. No man shall aid me, but the ears of all men shall tingle to hear of the deed which I shall dare to do; and thou thyself shalt say that, whatever was the life of Ulrica, her death well became the daughter of the noble Torquil. There is a force without beleaguering this accursed castle — hasten to lead them to the attack, and when thou shalt see a red flag wave from the turret on the eastern angle of the donjon, press the Normans hard — they will then have enough to do within.”

Cedric would have inquired farther into the purpose which she thus darkly announced, but the stern voice of Front-de-Bœuf was heard exclaiming, “Where tarries this loitering priest?”

Ulrica vanished through a private door, and Reginald Front-de-Bœuf entered the apartment. “Thy penitents, father, have made a long shrift — it is the better for them, since it is the last they shall ever make. Hast thou prepared them for death?”

“I found them,” said Cedric, in such French as he could command, “expecting the worst, from the moment they knew into whose power they had fallen.”

“How now, Sir Friar,” replied Front-de-Bœuf, “thy speech, methinks, smacks of a Saxon tongue?”

“I was bred in the convent of St. Withold of Burton,” answered Cedric.



“Aye?” said the Baron; “it had been better for thee to have been a Norman, and better for my purpose too; but need has no choice of messengers. That St. Withold’s of Burton is a howlet’s nest worth the harrying. But do me one cast of thy holy office, and thou shalt sleep as safe in thy cell as a snail within his shell of proof.”

“Speak your commands,” said Cedric, with suppressed emotion.

“Follow me through this passage, then, that I may dismiss thee by the postern. Thou seest, Sir Friar, yon herd of Saxon swine, who have dared to environ this castle of Torquilstone.—Tell them whatever thou hast a mind of the weakness of this fortalice, or aught else that can detain them before it for twenty-four hours. Meantime bear thou this scroll to the castle of Philip de Malvoisin; say it cometh from me, and is written by the Templar Brian de Bois-Guilbert, and that I pray him to send it to York with all the speed man and horse can make. Meanwhile, tell him to doubt nothing he shall find us whole and sound behind our battlement.—Shame on it, that we should be compelled to hide thus by a pack of runagates, who are wont to fly even at the flash of our pennons and the tramp of our horses! I say to thee, priest, contrive some cast of thine art to keep the knaves where they are, until our friends bring up their lances.”

Front-de-Bœuf, in the meanwhile, led the way to a postern, where, passing the moat on a single plank, they reached a small barbican, or exterior defense, which communicated with the open field by a well-fortified sally-port.

“Begone, then; and if thou wilt do mine errand, and if thou return hither when it is done, thou shalt see Saxon flesh cheap as ever was hog’s in the shambles of



Sheffield. Something in hand the whilst,” continued the Norman; and, as they parted at the postern door, he thrust into Cedric’s reluctant hand a gold byzant, adding, “Remember, I will flay off both cowl and skin if thou failest in thy purpose.”

“And full leave will I give thee to do both,” answered Cedric, leaving the postern, and striding forth over the free field with a joyful step, “if, when we meet next, I deserve not better at thine hand.”—Turning then back towards the castle, he threw the piece of gold towards the donor, exclaiming at the same time, “False Norman, thy money perish with thee!”

Front-de-Bœuf heard the words imperfectly, but the action was suspicious. “Archers,” he called to the warders on the outward battlements; “send me an arrow through yon monk’s frock!—Yet stay,” he said, as his retainers were bending their bows, “it avails not—we must thus far trust him since we have no better shift. I think he dares not betray me; at the worst I can but treat with these Saxon dogs whom I have safe in kennel. Ho! Giles jailer, let them bring Cedric of Rotherwood before me, and the other churl, his companion—him I mean of Coningsburgh—Athelstane there, or what call they him? Their very names are an encumbrance to a Norman knight’s mouth, and have, as it were, a flavor of bacon. Give me a stoup of wine, as jolly Prince John said, that I may wash away the relish; place it in the armory, and thither lead the prisoners.”

His commands were obeyed; and upon entering that Gothic apartment, hung with many spoils won by his own valor and that of his father, he found a flagon of wine on the massive oaken table, and the two Saxon captives under the guard of four of his dependants. Front-de-Bœuf took a long draught of wine, and then addressed



his prisoners; — for the manner in which Wamba drew the cap over his face, the change of dress, the gloomy and broken light, and the Baron's imperfect acquaintance with the features of Cedric, who avoided his Norman neighbors, and seldom stirred beyond his own domains, prevented him from discovering that the most important of his captives had made his escape.

“Gallants of England,” said Front-de-Bœuf, “how relish ye your entertainment at Torquilstone? Have ye forgotten how ye requited the unmerited hospitality of the royal John? By St. Denis, an ye pay not the richer ransom, I will hang ye up by the feet from the iron bars of these windows, till the kites and hooded crows have made skeletons of you! Speak out, ye Saxon dogs — what bid ye for your worthless lives? — How say you, you of Rotherwood?”

“Not a doit I,” answered poor Wamba; “and for hanging up by the feet, my brain has been topsy-turvy, they say, ever since the biggin was bound first round my head; so turning me upside down may peradventure restore it again.”

“St. Genevieve!” said Front-de-Bœuf, “what have we got here?”

And with the back of his hand he struck Cedric's cap from the head of the Jester, and, throwing open his collar, discovered the fatal badge of servitude, the silver collar round his neck.

“Giles — Clement — dogs and varlets!” exclaimed the furious Norman, “what have you brought me here?”

“I think I can tell you,” said De Bracy, who just entered the apartment. “This is Cedric's clown, who fought so manful a skirmish with Isaac of York about a question of precedence.”



“I will settle it for them both,” replied Front-de-Bœuf; “they shall hang on the same gallows, unless his master and this boar of Coningsburgh will pay well for their lives. Their wealth is the least they can surrender; they must also carry off with them the swarms that are besetting the castle, subscribe a surrender of their pretended immunities, and live under us as serfs and vassals; too happy if, in the new world that is about to begin, we leave them the breath of their nostrils.—Go,” said he to two of his attendants, “fetch me the right Cedric hither, and I pardon your error for once; the rather that you but mistook a fool for a Saxon franklin.”

“Aye, but,” said Wamba, “your chivalrous excellency will find there are more fools than franklins among us.”

“What means the knave?” said Front-de-Bœuf, looking towards his followers, who, lingering and loth, faltered forth their belief that, if this were not Cedric who was there in presence, they knew not what was become of him.

“Saints of Heaven!” exclaimed De Bracy, “he must have escaped in the monk’s garments!”

“Fiends of hell!” echoed Front-de-Bœuf, “it was then the boar of Rotherwood whom I ushered to the postern, and dismissed with my own hands!—And thou,” he said to Wamba, “I will give thee holy orders—I will shave thy crown for thee!—Here, let them tear the scalp from his head, and then pitch him headlong from the battlements—Thy trade is to jest, canst thou jest now?”

“You deal with me better than your word, noble knight,” whimpered forth poor Wamba, whose habits of buffoonery were not overcome by the prospect of



death; "if you give me the red cap you propose, out of a simple monk you will make a cardinal."

"The poor wretch," said De Bracy, "is resolved to die in his vocation.—Front-de-Bœuf, you shall not slay him. Give him to me to make sport for my Free Companions.—How sayst thou, knave? Wilt thou take heart of grace, and go to the wars with me?"

"Aye, with my master's leave," said Wamba; "for, look you, I must not slip collar without his permission."

"Thou dost well, De Bracy," said Front-de-Bœuf, "to stand there listening to a fool's jargon, when destruction is gaping for us! Seest thou not we are overreached, and that our proposed mode of communicating with our friends without has been disconcerted by this same motley gentleman thou art so fond to brother? What views have we to expect but instant storm?"

"To the battlements then," said De Bracy; "when didst thou ever see me the graver for the thoughts of battle? Call the Templar yonder, and let him fight but half so well for his life as he has done for his Order — Make thou to the walls thyself with thy huge body — Let me do my poor endeavor in my own way, and I tell thee the Saxon outlaws may as well attempt to scale the clouds as the castle of Torquilstone; or, if you will treat with the banditti, why not employ the mediation of this worthy franklin, who seems in such deep contemplation of the wine-flagon? — Here, Saxon," he continued, addressing Athelstane, and handing the cup to him, "rinse thy throat with that noble liquor, and rouse up thy soul to say what thou wilt do for thy liberty."

"What a man of mold may," answered Athelstane, "providing it be what a man of manhood ought.—Dismiss me free, with my companions, and I will pay a ransom of a thousand marks."



“ And wilt moreover assure us the retreat of that scum of mankind who are swarming around the castle, contrary to God’s peace and the king’s? ” said Front-de-Bœuf.

“ In so far as I can,” answered Athelstane, “ I will withdraw them; and I fear not but that my father Cedric will do his best to assist me.”

“ We are agreed, then,” said Front-de-Bœuf. “ But mark, this extends not to the Jew Isaac.”

“ Neither does the ransom include the Lady Rowena,” said De Bracy. “ It shall never be said I was scared out of a fair prize without striking a blow for it.”

“ Neither,” said Front-de-Bœuf, “ does our treaty refer to this wretched Jester, whom I retain, that I may make him an example to every knave who turns jest into earnest.”

“ The Lady Rowena,” answered Athelstane, with the most steady countenance, “ is my affianced bride. I will be drawn by wild horses before I consent to part with her. The slave Wamba has this day saved the life of my father Cedric. I will lose mine, ere a hair of his head be injured.”

“ Thy affianced bride! — The Lady Rowena the affianced bride of a vassal like thee!” said De Bracy. “ Saxon, thou dreamest that the days of thy seven kingdoms are returned again. I tell thee, the princes of the house of Anjou confer not their wards on men of such lineage as thine.”

“ My lineage, proud Norman,” replied Athelstane, “ is drawn from a source more pure and ancient than that of a beggarly Frenchman, whose living is won by selling the blood of the thieves whom he assembles under his paltry standard. Kings were my ancestors, strong in war, and wise in council, who every day feasted in their



hall more hundreds than thou canst number individual followers; whose names have been sung by minstrels, and their laws recorded by Witenagemotes; whose bones were interred amid the prayers of saints, and over whose tombs minsters have been builded."

"Thou hast it, De Bracy," said Front-de-Bœuf, well pleased with the rebuff which his companion had received; "the Saxon hath hit thee fairly."

"As fairly as a captive can strike," said De Bracy, with apparent carelessness; "for he whose hands are tied should have his tongue at freedom.—But thy glibness of reply, comrade," rejoined he, speaking to Athelstane, "will not win the freedom of the Lady Rowena."

The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of a menial, who announced that a monk demanded admittance at the postern gate.

"In the name of St. Bennet, the prince of these bull-beggars," said Front-de-Bœuf, "have we a real monk this time, or another impostor? Search him, slaves."

"Let me endure the extremity of your anger, my lord," said Giles, "if this be not a real shaveling. Your squire Jocelyn knows him well, and will vouch him to be Brother Ambrose, a monk in attendance upon the Prior of Jorvaulx."

"Admit him," said Front-de-Bœuf; "most likely he brings us news from his jovial master. Surely the devil keeps holiday, and the priests are relieved from duty, that they are strolling thus wildly through the country. Remove these prisoners; and, Saxon, think on what thou hast heard."

The Saxon prisoners were accordingly removed, just as they introduced the monk Ambrose, who appeared to be in great perturbation.

"Holy Mother!" said the monk, as he addressed the



assembled knights, “I am at last safe and in Christian keeping!”

“Safe thou art,” replied De Bracy, “and for Christianity, here is the stout Baron Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, whose utter abomination is a Jew; and the good Knight Templar, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, whose trade is to slay Saracens — If these are not good marks of Christianity, I know no other which they bear about them.”

“Ye are friends and allies of our reverend father in God, Aymer, Prior of Jorvaulx,” said the monk, without noticing the tone of De Bracy’s reply; “ye owe him aid both by knightly faith and holy charity; for what saith the blessed St. Augustin, in his treatise —”

“What saith the devil!” interrupted Front-de-Bœuf; “or rather what dost *thou* say, Sir Priest? We have little time to hear texts from the holy fathers.”

“Blessed Mary!” ejaculated Father Ambrose, “how prompt to ire are these unhallowed laymen! But be it known to you, brave knights, that, violent hands having been imposed on my reverend superior, and the men of Belial having rifled his mails and budgets, and stripped him of two hundred marks of pure, refined gold, they do yet demand of him a large sum beside, ere they will suffer him to depart from their uncircumcised hands. Wherefore the reverend father in God prays you, as his dear friends, to rescue him, either by paying down the ransom at which they hold him, or by force of arms, at your best discretion.”

“The foul fiend quell the Prior!” said Front-de-Bœuf; “his morning’s draught has been a deep one. When did thy master hear of a Norman baron unbuckling his purse to relieve a churchman, whose bags are ten times as weighty as ours? — And how can we do aught by valor to free him, that are cooped up here by



ten times our number, and expect an assault every moment? ”

“ And that was what I was about to tell you,” said the monk, “ had your hastiness allowed me time. But, God help me, I am old, and these foul onslaughts distract an aged man’s brain. Nevertheless, it is of verity that they assemble a camp, and raise a bank against the walls of this castle.”

“ To the battlements,” cried De Bracy, “ and let us mark what these knaves do without; ” and so saying, he opened a latticed window which led to a sort of projecting balcony, and immediately called from thence to those in the apartment.—“ St. Denis, but the old monk hath brought true tidings! — They bring forward huge shields made of planks, and the archers muster on the skirts of the wood like a dark cloud before a hailstorm.”

Reginald Front-de-Bœuf also looked out upon the field, and immediately snatched his bugle; and, after winding a long and loud blast, he commanded his men to their posts on the walls.

“ De Bracy, look to the eastern side, where the walls are lowest — Noble Bois-Guilbert, thy trade hath well taught thee how to attack and defend, look thou to the western side — I myself will take post at the barbican. Yet, do not confine your exertions to any one spot, noble friends! — We must this day be everywhere, and multiply ourselves, were it possible, so as to carry by our presence succor and relief wherever the attack is hottest.”

“ But, noble knights,” exclaimed Father Ambrose, “ will none of ye hear the message of the reverend father in God, Aymer, Prior of Jorvaulx? — I beseech thee to hear me, noble Sir Reginald! ”

“ Go patter thy petitions to Heaven,” said the fierce



Norman, “for we on earth have no time to listen to them.—Ho! there, Anselm! see that seething pitch and oil are ready to pour on the heads of these audacious traitors—Look that the cross-bowmen lack not bolts—Fling abroad my banner with the old bull’s head—the knaves shall soon find with whom they have to do this day!”

The Templar had in the meantime been looking out on the proceedings of the besiegers with rather more attention than the brutal Front-de-Bœuf or his giddy companion.

“By the faith of mine Order,” he said, “these men approach with more touch of discipline than could have been judged, however they come by it. See ye how dexterously they avail themselves of every cover which a tree or bush affords, and shun exposing themselves to the shot of our cross-bows? I spy neither banner nor pennon among them, and yet will I gauge my golden chain that they are led on by some noble knight or gentleman, skillful in the practice of wars.”

“I espy him,” said De Bracy; “I see the waving of a knight’s crest, and the gleam of his armor. See yon tall man in black mail, who is busied marshaling the farther troop of the rascal yeomen—by St. Denis, I hold him to be the same whom we called the Black Slug-gard, who overthrew thee, Front-de-Bœuf, in the lists at Ashby.”

“So much the better,” said Front-de-Bœuf, “that he comes here to give me my revenge. Some paltry fellow he must be, who dared not stay to assert his claim to the tourney prize which chance had assigned him. I should in vain have sought for him where knights and nobles seek their foes, and right glad am I he hath here shown himself among yon villain yeomanry.”



The demonstrations of the enemy's immediate approach cut off all farther discourse. Each knight repaired to his post, and at the head of the few followers whom they were able to muster, and who were in numbers inadequate to defend the whole extent of the walls, they awaited with calm determination the threatened assault.



## CHAPTER XXV

### THE FIRST ASSAULT

WHEN Ivanhoe sunk down, and seemed abandoned by all the world, it was the importunity of Rebecca which prevailed on her father to have the gallant young warrior transported from the lists to the house which, for the time, the Jews inhabited in the suburbs of Ashby.

Rebecca proceeded with her own hands to examine and to bind up his wounds. Her knowledge of medicine and of the healing art had been acquired under an aged Jewess, the daughter of one of their most celebrated doctors, who loved Rebecca as her own child, and was believed to have communicated to her secrets which had been left to herself by her sage father. In the morning Ivanhoe's kind physician found him entirely free from feverish symptoms, and fit to undergo the fatigue of a journey.

He was deposited in the horse-litter which had brought him from the lists, and every precaution was taken for his traveling with ease. The Jew, his daughter, and her wounded patient, were found by Cedric, as has already been noticed, and soon afterwards fell into the power of De Bracy; who commanded two of his own squires to keep close by the litter, and to suffer no one to approach it. On arriving at Torquilstone, De Bracy's squires conveyed Ivanhoe, under the name of a wounded comrade, to a distant apartment. This explanation was accordingly returned by these men to Front-de-Bœuf,



when he questioned them why they did not make for the battlements upon the alarm.

“ A wounded companion ! ” he replied in great wrath and astonishment. “ No wonder that churls and yeomen wax so presumptuous as even to lay leaguer before castles, and that clowns and swineherds send defiances to nobles, since men-at-arms have turned sick men’s nurses, and Free Companions are grown keepers of dying folks’ curtains, when the castle is about to be assailed.— To the battlements, ye loitering villains ! ” he exclaimed, raising his stentorian voice till the arches around rung again — “ to the battlements, or I will splinter your bones with this truncheon ! ”

The men sulkily replied that they desired nothing better than to go to the battlements, providing Front-de-Bœuf would bear them out with their master, who had commanded them to tend the dying man.

“ The dying man, knaves ! ” rejoined the Baron ; “ I promise thee we shall all be dying men, and we stand not to it the more stoutly. But I will relieve the guard upon this caitiff companion of yours.— Here, Ulrica — hag — fiend of a Saxon witch — hearest me not ? Tend me this bedridden fellow, since he must needs be tended, while these knaves use their weapons.— Here be two cross-bows, comrades, with windlances and bolts — to the barbican with you, and see you drive each bolt through a Saxon brain. ”

The men, who, like most of their description, were fond of enterprise, and detested inaction, went joyfully to the scene of danger as they were commanded, and thus the charge of Ivanhoe was transferred to Ulrica. But she, whose brain was burning with remembrance of injuries and with hopes of vengeance, was readily induced to devolve upon Rebecca the care of her patient.



In finding herself once more by the side of Ivanhoe, Rebecca was astonished at the keen sensation of pleasure which she experienced, even at a time when all around them both was danger, if not despair. As she felt his pulse, and inquired after his health, there was a softness in her touch and in her accents, implying a kinder interest than she would herself have been pleased to have voluntarily expressed. Ivanhoe answered her hastily that he was, in point of health, as well, and better, than he could have expected — “Thanks,” he said, “dear Rebecca, to thy helpful skill. My mind, gentle maiden,” continued Ivanhoe, “is more disturbed by anxiety than my body with pain. From the speeches of these men who were my warders just now, I learn that I am a prisoner, and, if I judge aright of the loud, hoarse voice which even now dispatched them hence on some military duty, I am in the castle of Front-de-Bœuf. If so, how will this end, or how can I protect Rowena and my father?”

Rebecca hastened to give Ivanhoe what information she could; but it amounted only to this, that the Templar Bois-Guilbert and the Baron Front-de-Bœuf were commanders within the castle; that it was beleaguered from without, but by whom she knew not. She added, that there was a Christian priest within the castle who might be possessed of more information.

“A Christian priest!” said the knight joyfully; “fetch him hither, Rebecca, if thou canst — say a sick man desires his ghostly counsel — say what thou wilt, but bring him.”

Rebecca, in compliance with the wishes of Ivanhoe, made that attempt to bring Cedric into the wounded knight's chamber which was defeated, as we have already seen, by the interference of Ulrica, who had been



also on the watch to intercept the supposed monk. Rebecca retired to communicate to Ivanhoe the result of her errand.

They had not much leisure to regret the failure of this source of intelligence; for the noise within the castle, occasioned by the defensive preparations, now increased into tenfold bustle and clamor. The heavy step of the men-at-arms traversed the battlements, or resounded on the narrow and winding passages and stairs which led to the various balconies and points of defense. The voices of the knights were heard, animating their followers, or directing means of defense, while their commands were often drowned in the clashing of armor, or the clamorous shouts of those whom they addressed. Rebecca's eye kindled, although the blood fled from her cheeks; and there was a strong mixture of fear and of a thrilling sense of the sublime as she repeated, half-whispering to herself, half-speaking to her companion, the sacred text — "The quiver rattleth — the glittering spear and the shield — the noise of the captains and the shouting!"

But Ivanhoe was like the war-horse of that sublime passage, glowing with impatience at his inactivity, and with his ardent desire to mingle in the affray of which these sounds were the introduction. "If I could but drag myself," he said, "to yonder window, that I might see how this brave game is like to go — If I had but bow to shoot a shaft, or battle-ax to strike were it but a single blow for our deliverance! It is in vain — it is in vain — I am alike nerveless and weaponless!"

"Fret not thyself, noble knight," answered Rebecca, "the sounds have ceased of a sudden — it may be they join not battle."

"Thou knowest nought of it," said Wilfred, impatiently; "this dead pause only shows that the men are at



their posts on the walls, and expecting an instant attack; what we have heard was but the distant muttering of the storm — it will burst anon in all its fury. Could I but reach yonder window! ”

“ Thou wilt but injure thyself by the attempt, noble knight,” replied his attendant. Observing his extreme solicitude, she firmly added, “ I myself will stand at the lattice, and describe to you as I can what passes without.”

“ You must not — you shall not! ” exclaimed Ivanhoe. “ Each lattice, each aperture, will be soon a mark for the archers; some random shaft — ”

“ It shall be welcome! ” murmured Rebecca, as with firm pace she ascended two or three steps, which led to the window of which they spoke.

“ Rebecca — dear Rebecca! ” exclaimed Ivanhoe, “ this is no maiden’s pastime — do not expose thyself to wounds and death, and render me forever miserable for having given the occasion; at least, cover thyself with yonder ancient buckler, and show as little of your person at the lattice as may be.”

Following with wonderful promptitude the directions of Ivanhoe, and availing herself of the protection of the large, ancient shield, which she placed against the lower part of the window, Rebecca, with tolerable security to herself, could witness part of what was passing without the castle, and report to Ivanhoe the preparations which the assailants were making for the storm. Indeed, the situation which she thus obtained was peculiarly favorable for this purpose, because, being placed on an angle of the main building, Rebecca could not only see what passed beyond the precincts of the castle, but also commanded a view of the outwork likely to be the first object of the meditated assault. It was an exterior fortification



of no great height or strength, intended to protect the postern-gate, through which Cedric had been recently dismissed by Front-de-Bœuf. The castle moat divided this species of barbican from the rest of the fortress, so that, in case of its being taken, it was easy to cut off the communication with the main building, by withdrawing the temporary bridge. In the outwork was a sallyport corresponding to the postern of the castle, and the whole was surrounded by a strong palisade. Rebecca could observe, from the number of men placed for the defense of this post, that the besieged entertained apprehensions for its safety; and from the mustering of the assailants in a direction nearly opposite to the outwork, it seemed no less plain that it had been selected as a vulnerable point of attack.

These appearances she hastily communicated to Ivanhoe, and added, “The skirts of the woods seem lined with archers, although only a few are advanced from its dark shadow.”

“Under what banner?” asked Ivanhoe.

“Under no ensign of war which I can observe,” answered Rebecca.

“A singular novelty,” muttered the knight, “to advance to storm such a castle without pennon or banner displayed!—Seest thou who they be that act as leaders?”

“A knight, clad in sable armor, is the most conspicuous,” said the Jewess; “he alone is armed from head to heel, and seems to assume the direction of all around him.”

“What device does he bear on his shield?” replied Ivanhoe.

“Something resembling a bar of iron and a padlock painted blue on the black shield.”



“ A fetterlock and shackle-bolt azure,” said Ivanhoe; “ I know not who may bear the device, but well I ween it might now be my own. Canst thou not see the motto? ”

“ Scarce the device itself at this distance,” replied Rebecca; “ but when the sun glances fair upon his shield it shows as I tell you.”

“ Seem there no other leaders? ” exclaimed the anxious inquirer.

“ None of mark and distinction that I can behold from this station,” said Rebecca; “ but doubtless the other side of the castle is also assailed. They appear even now preparing to advance — God of Zion protect us! — What a dreadful sight! — Those who advance first bear huge shields and defenses made of plank; the others follow, bending their bows as they come on. — They raise their bows! — God of Moses, forgive the creatures Thou hast made! ”

Her description was here suddenly interrupted by the signal for assault, which was given by the blast of a shrill bugle, and at once answered by a flourish of the Norman trumpets from the battlements, which, mingled with the deep and hollow clang of the nakers (a species of kettle-drum), retorted in notes of defiance the challenge of the enemy. The shouts of both parties augmented the fearful din, the assailants crying, “ St. George for Merry England! ” and the Normans answering them with loud cries of “ Forward, De Bracy! ” — “ Beau-seant! Beau-seant! ” — “ Front-de-Bœuf to the rescue! ” according to the war-cries of their different commanders.

It was not, however, by clamor that the contest was to be decided, and the desperate efforts of the assailants were met by an equally vigorous defense on the part of



the besieged. The archers, trained by their woodland pastimes to the most effective use of the long-bow, shot, to use the appropriate phrase of the time, so “wholly together,” that no point at which a defender could show the least part of his person escaped their cloth-yard shafts.

By this heavy discharge, which continued as thick and sharp as hail, while, notwithstanding, every arrow had its individual aim, and flew by scores together against each embrasure and opening in the parapets, as well as at every window where a defender either occasionally had post, or might be suspected to be stationed — by this sustained discharge, two or three of the garrison were slain and several others wounded. But, confident in their armor of proof, and in the cover which their situation afforded, the followers of Front-de-Bœuf and his allies showed an obstinacy in defense proportioned to the fury of the attack, and replied with the discharge of their large cross-bows, as well as with their long-bows, slings, and other missile weapons, to the close and continued shower of arrows; and, as the assailants were necessarily but indifferently protected, did considerably more damage than they received at their hand. The whizzing of shafts and of missiles on both sides was interrupted only by the shouts which arose when either side inflicted or sustained some notable loss.

“And I must lie here like a bedridden monk,” exclaimed Ivanhoe, “while the game that gives me freedom or death is played out by the hand of others! — Look from the window once again, kind maiden, but beware that you are not marked by the archers beneath — Look out once more, and tell me if they yet advance to the storm.”

With patient courage, strengthened by the interval



which she had employed in mental devotion, Rebecca again took post at the lattice, sheltering herself, however, so as not to be visible from beneath.

“What dost thou see, Rebecca?” again demanded the wounded knight.

“Nothing but the cloud of arrows flying so thick as to dazzle mine eyes, and to hide the bowmen who shoot them.”

“That cannot endure,” said Ivanhoe; “if they press not right on to carry the castle by pure force of arms, the archery may avail but little against stone walls and bulwarks. Look for the Knight of the Fetterlock, fair Rebecca, and see how he bears himself; for as the leader is, so will his followers be.”

“I see him not,” said Rebecca.

“Foul craven!” exclaimed Ivanhoe; “does he blench from the helm when the wind blows highest?”

“He blenches not! — he blenches not!” said Rebecca, “I see him now; he leads a body of men close under the outer barrier of the barbican.— They pull down the piles and palisades; they hew down the barriers with axes.— His high black plume floats abroad over the throng, like a raven over the field of the slain.— They have made a breach in the barriers — they rush in — they are thrust back! — Front-de-Bœuf heads the defenders; I see his gigantic form above the press. They throng again to the breach, and the pass is disputed hand to hand, and man to man. God of Jacob! it is the meeting of two fierce tides — the conflict of two oceans moved by adverse winds!”

She turned her head from the lattice, as if unable longer to endure a sight so terrible.

“Look forth again, Rebecca,” said Ivanhoe, mistaking the cause of her retiring; “the archery must in some



degree have ceased, since they are now fighting hand to hand.—Look again, there is now less danger.”

Rebecca again looked forth, and almost immediately exclaimed, “Holy prophets of the law! Front-de-Bœuf and the Black Knight fight hand to hand on the breach, amid the roar of their followers, who watch the progress of the strife.—Heaven strike with the cause of the oppressed and of the captive!” She then uttered a loud shriek and exclaimed, “He is down!—he is down!”

“Who is down?” cried Ivanhoe; “for our dear Lady’s sake, tell me which has fallen?”

“The Black Knight,” answered Rebecca, faintly; then instantly again shouted with joyful eagerness: “But no—but no! the name of the Lord of Hosts be blessed; he is on foot again, and fights as if there were twenty men’s strength in his single arm.—His sword is broken—he snatches an ax from a yeoman—he presses Front-de-Bœuf with blow on blow—The giant stoops and totters like an oak under the steel of the woodman—he falls—he falls!”

“Front-de-Bœuf?” exclaimed Ivanhoe.

“Front-de-Bœuf,” answered the Jewess. “His men rush to the rescue, headed by the haughty Templar—their united force compels the champion to pause.—They drag Front-de-Bœuf within the walls.”

“The assailants have won the barriers, have they not?” said Ivanhoe.

“They have—they have!” exclaimed Rebecca; “and they press the besieged hard upon the outer wall; some plant ladders, some swarm like bees, and endeavor to ascend upon the shoulders of each other—down go stones, beams, and trunks of trees upon their heads, and as fast as they bear the wounded to the rear, fresh men supply their places in the assault. Great God! hast



Thou given men Thine own image that it should be thus cruelly defaced by the hands of their brethren! ”

“ Think not of that,” said Ivanhoe; “ this is no time for such thoughts — Who yield? — who push their way? ”

“ The ladders are thrown down,” replied Rebecca, shuddering; “ the soldiers lie groveling under them like crushed reptiles.— The besieged have the better.”

“ St George strike for us! ” exclaimed the knight; “ do the false yeomen give way? ”

“ No! ” exclaimed Rebecca, “ they bear themselves right yeomanly. The Black Knight approaches the postern with his huge ax — the thundering blows which he deals, you may hear them above all the din and shouts of the battle — Stones and beams are hailed down on the bold champion — he regards them no more than if they were thistle-down or feathers! ”

“ By St. John of Acre,” said Ivanhoe, raising himself joyfully on his couch, “ methought there was but one man in England that might do such a deed! ”

“ The postern gate shakes,” continued Rebecca — “ it crashes — it is splintered by his blows — they rush in — the outwork is won. O God! they hurl the defenders from the battlements — they throw them into the moat. O men, if ye be indeed men, spare them that can resist no longer! ”

“ The bridge which communicates with the castle — have they won that pass? ” exclaimed Ivanhoe.

“ No,” replied Rebecca; “ the Templar has destroyed the plank on which they crossed — few of the defenders escaped with him into the castle — the shrieks and cries which you hear tell the fate of the others. Alas! I see it is still more difficult to look upon victory than upon battle.”



“ What do they now, maiden? ” said Ivanhoe; “ look forth yet again — this is no time to faint at bloodshed.”

“ It is over for the time,” answered Rebecca; “ our friends strengthen themselves within the outwork which they have mastered, and it affords them so good a shelter from the foemen’s shot that the garrison only bestow a few bolts on it from interval to interval, as if rather to disquiet than effectually to injure them.”

“ Our friends,” said Wilfred, “ will surely not abandon an enterprise so gloriously begun and so happily attained.— Oh, no! I will put my faith in the good knight whose ax hath rent heart-of-oak and bars of iron.— Singular,” he again muttered to himself, “ if there be two who can do a deed of such derring-do! A fetter-lock and a shackle-bolt on a field sable — what may that mean? Seest thou nought else, Rebecca, by which the Black Knight may be distinguished? ”

“ Nothing,” said the Jewess: “ all about him is black as the wing of the night raven. Nothing can I spy that can mark him further; but having once seen him put forth his strength in battle, methinks I could know him again among a thousand warriors. He rushes to the fray as if he were summoned to a banquet. There is more than mere strength — there seems as if the whole soul and spirit of the champion were given to every blow which he deals upon his enemies. God assoilzie him of the sin of bloodshed! — it is fearful, yet magnificent, to behold how the arm and heart of one man can triumph over hundreds.”



## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE SECOND ASSAULT

DURING the interval of quiet which followed the first success of the besiegers, while the one party was preparing to pursue their advantage and the other to strengthen their means of defense, the Templar and De Bracy held brief counsel together in the hall of the castle.

“Where is Front-de-Bœuf?” said the latter, who had superintended the defense of the fortress on the other side; “men say he hath been slain.”

“He lives,” said the Templar coolly — “lives as yet; but had he worn the bull’s head of which he bears the name, and ten plates of iron to fence it withal, he must have gone down before yonder fatal ax. Yet a few hours, and Front-de-Bœuf is with his fathers — a powerful limb lopped off Prince John’s enterprise. How fought these villain yeomen on thy side?”

“Like fiends incarnate,” said De Bracy. “They swarmed close up to the walls, headed, as I think, by the knave who won the prize at the archery. Had I not been armed in proof, the villain had marked me down seven times. He told every rivet on my armor with a cloth-yard shaft, that rapped against my ribs with as little compunction as if my bones had been of iron — but that I wore a shirt of Spanish mail under my plate-coat, I had been fairly sped.”

“But you maintained your post?” said the Templar. “We lost the outwork on our part.”



“ That is a shrewd loss,” said De Bracy; “ the knaves will find cover there to assault the castle more closely, and may, if not well watched, gain some unguarded corner of a tower, or some forgotten window, and so break in upon us. Our numbers are too few for the defense of every point, and the men complain that they can nowhere show themselves, but they are the mark for as many arrows as a parish-butt on a holyday even. How think you, Sir Brian, were we not better make a virtue of necessity, and compound with the rogues by delivering up our prisoners? ”

“ How? ” exclaimed the Templar; “ deliver up our prisoners, and stand an object alike of ridicule and execration, as the doughty warriors who dared by a night-attack to possess themselves of the persons of a party of defenseless travelers, yet could not make good a strong castle against a vagabond troop of outlaws, led by swineherds, jesters, and the very refuse of mankind? — Shame on thy counsel, Maurice de Bracy! — The ruins of this castle shall bury both my body and my shame, ere I consent to such base and dishonorable composition.”

“ Let us to the walls, then,” said De Bracy, carelessly; “ that man never breathed, be he Turk or Templar, who held life at a lighter rate than I do. But I trust there is no dishonor in wishing I had here some two scores of my gallant troop of Free Companions! — Oh, my brave lances! if ye but knew how hard your captain were this day bested, how soon should I see my banner at the head of your clump of spears! And how short while would these rabble villains stand to endure your encounter! ”

“ Wish for whom thou wilt,” said the Templar, “ but let us make what defense we can with the soldiers who remain. They are chiefly Front-de-Bœuf’s followers,



hated by the English for a thousand acts of insolence and oppression.”

“The better,” said De Bracy; “the rugged slaves will defend themselves to the last drop of their blood, ere they encounter the revenge of the peasants without. Let us up and be doing, then, Brian de Bois-Guilbert; and, live or die, thou shalt see Maurice de Bracy bear himself this day as a gentleman of blood and lineage.”

“To the walls!” answered the Templar; and they both ascended the battlements to do all that skill could dictate and manhood accomplish, in defense of the place. They readily agreed that the point of greatest danger was that opposite to the outwork of which the assailants had possessed themselves. The castle, indeed, was divided from that barbican by the moat, and it was impossible that the besiegers could assail the postern door, with which the outwork corresponded, without surmounting that obstacle; but it was the opinion both of the Templar and De Bracy that the besiegers would endeavor, by a formidable assault, to draw the chief part of the defenders’ observation to this point, and take measures to avail themselves of every negligence which might take place in the defense elsewhere. To guard against such an evil, their numbers only permitted the knights to place sentinels from space to space along the walls in communication with each other, who might give the alarm whenever danger was threatened. Meanwhile, they agreed that De Bracy should command the defense of the postern, and the Templar should keep with him a score of men or thereabouts as a body of reserve, ready to hasten to any other point which might be suddenly threatened. The loss of the barbican had also this unfortunate effect, that, notwithstanding the superior height of the castle walls, the besieged could not see



from them, with the same precision as before, the operations of the enemy; for some straggling underwood approached so near the sallyport of the outworks that the assailants might introduce into it whatever force they thought proper, not only under cover, but even without the knowledge of the defenders. Utterly uncertain, therefore, upon what point the storm was to burst, De Bracy and his companion were under the necessity of providing against every possible contingency, and their followers, however brave, experienced the anxious dejection of mind incident to men enclosed by enemies, who possessed the power of choosing their time and mode of attack.

Meanwhile, the lord of the beleaguered and endangered castle lay upon a bed of bodily pain and mental agony. He had not the usual resource of bigots in that superstitious period, most of whom were wont to atone for the crimes they were guilty of, by liberality to the Church, stupefying by this means their terrors by the idea of atonement and forgiveness.

“Where be these dog-priests now,” growled the baron, “who set such price on their ghostly mummary? — where be all those unshod Carmelites, for whom old Front-de-Bœuf founded the convent of St. Anne, robbing his heir of many a fair rood of meadow, and many a fat field and close. Tell the Templar to come hither; he is a priest, and may do something — But no! as well confess myself to the devil as to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, who recks neither of Heaven nor of Hell. — I have heard old men talk of prayer — prayer by their own voice — such need not to court or to bribe the false priest. But I — I dare not!”

“Lives Reginald Front-de-Bœuf,” said a broken and



shrill voice close by his bedside, “to say there is that which he dares not? Listen to these horrid sounds,” for the din of the recommenced assault now rung fearfully loud from the battlements of the castle; “in that war-cry is the downfall of thy house. The blood-cemented fabric of Front-de-Bœuf’s power totters to the foundation, and before the foes he most despised! The Saxon, Reginald! — the scorned Saxon assails thy walls!”

“Gods and fiends!” exclaimed the wounded knight. “Oh, for one moment’s strength, to drag myself to the fight, and perish as becomes my name!”

“Think not of it, valiant warrior!” replied Ulrica; “thou shalt die no soldier’s death, but perish like the fox in his den, when the peasants have set fire to the cover around it. Markest thou the smoldering and suffocating vapor which already eddies in sable folds through the chamber? Rememberest thou the magazine of fuel that is stored beneath these apartments?”

“Woman!” he exclaimed with fury, “thou hast not set fire to it? — By Heaven, thou hast, and the castle is in flames!”

“They are fast rising at least,” said Ulrica, with frightful composure; “and a signal shall soon wave to warn the besiegers to press hard upon those who would extinguish them.—Farewell, Front-de-Bœuf!”

Cedric, although not greatly confident in Ulrica’s message, omitted not to communicate her promise to the Black Knight and Locksley. They were well pleased to find they had a friend within the place, who might, in the moment of need, be able to facilitate their entrance, and readily agreed with the Saxon that a storm, under whatever disadvantage, ought to be attempted, as the only means of liberating the prisoners.



“ And now, good Locksley,” said the Black Knight, “ were it not well that noble Cedric should assume the direction of this assault? ”

“ Not a jot I,” returned Cedric; “ I have never been wont to study either how to take or how to hold out those abodes of tyrannic power which the Normans have erected in this groaning land. I will fight among the foremost; but my honest neighbors well know I am not a trained soldier in the discipline of wars or the attack of strongholds.”

“ Since it stands thus with noble Cedric,” said Locksley, “ I am most willing to take on me the direction of the archery; and ye shall hang me up on my own trysting-tree an the defenders be permitted to show themselves over the walls without being stuck with as many shafts as there are cloves in a gammon of bacon at Christmas.”

“ Well said, stout yeoman,” answered the Black Knight; “ and if I be thought worthy to have a charge in these matters, and can find among these brave men as many as are willing to follow a true English knight, I am ready, with such skill as my experience has taught me, to lead them to the attack of these walls.”

The parts being thus distributed to the leaders, they commenced the first assault, of which the reader has already heard the issue.

When the barbican was carried, the Sable Knight sent notice of the happy event to Locksley, requesting him at the same time to keep such a strict observation on the castle as might prevent the defenders from combining their force for a sudden sally, and recovering the outwork which they had lost. The knight employed the interval in causing to be constructed a sort of floating bridge, or long raft, by means of which he hoped to



cross the moat in despite of the resistance of the enemy.

When the raft was completed the Black Knight addressed the besiegers: "It avails not waiting here longer, my friends; the sun is descending to the west — and I have that upon my hands which will not permit me to tarry with you another day. Besides, it will be a marvel if the horsemen come not upon us from York, unless we speedily accomplish our purpose. Wherefore, one of ye go to Locksley, and bid him commence a discharge of arrows on the opposite side of the castle, and move forward as if about to assault it; and you, true English hearts, stand by me, and be ready to thrust the raft endlong over the moat whenever the postern on our side is thrown open. Follow me boldly across, and aid me to burst yon sallyport in the main wall of the castle. As many of you as like not this service, or are but ill armed to meet it, do you man the top of the outwork, draw your bowstrings to your ears, and mind you quell with your shot whatever shall appear to man the rampart. Noble Cedric, wilt thou take the direction of those which remain? "

"Not so, by the soul of Hereward! " said the Saxon; "lead, I cannot; but may posterity curse me in my grave, if I follow not with the foremost wherever thou shalt point the way. The quarrel is mine, and well it becomes me to be in the van of the battle. And — forgive the boast, Sir Knight — thou shalt this day see the naked breast of a Saxon as boldly presented to the battle as ever ye beheld the steel corselet of a Norman."

"In the name of God, then," said the knight, "fling open the door, and launch the floating bridge."

The portal, which led from the inner wall of the bar-bican to the moat, and which corresponded with a sallyport in the main wall of the castle, was now suddenly



opened; the temporary bridge was then thrust forward, and soon flashed in the waters, extending its length between the castle and outwork, and forming a slippery and precarious passage for two men abreast to cross the moat. Well aware of the importance of taking the foe by surprise, the Black Knight, closely followed by Cedric, threw himself upon the bridge, and reached the opposite side. Here he began to thunder with his ax upon the gate of the castle, protected in part from the shot and stones cast by the defenders by the ruins of the former drawbridge, which the Templar had demolished in his retreat from the barbican, leaving the counterpoise still attached to the upper part of the portal. The followers of the knight had no such shelter; two were instantly shot with cross-bow bolts, and two more fell into the moat; the others retreated back into the barbican.

The situation of Cedric and the Black Knight was now truly dangerous, and would have been still more so but for the constancy of the archers in the barbican, who ceased not to shower their arrows upon the battlements, distracting the attention of those by whom they were manned, and thus affording a respite to their two chiefs from the storm of missiles which must otherwise have overwhelmed them. But their situation was eminently perilous, and was becoming more so with every moment.

“Shame on ye all!” cried De Bracy to the soldiers around him; “do ye call yourselves cross-bowmen, and let these two dogs keep their station under the walls of the castle? — Heave over the coping stones from the battlement, an better may not be — Get pickaxe and levers, and down with the huge pinnacle!” pointing to a heavy piece of stone carved-work that projected from the parapet.

At this moment the besiegers caught sight of the red



flag upon the angle of the tower which Ulrica had described to Cedric. The stout yeoman Locksley was the first who was aware of it, as he was hasting to the outwork, impatient to see the progress of the assault.

“ St. George! ” he cried — “ Merry St. George for England! — To the charge, bold yeomen! why leave ye the good knight and noble Cedric to storm the pass alone? — Make in, mad priest, show thou canst fight for thy rosary — make in, brave yeomen! — the castle is ours, we have friends within — See yonder flag, it is the appointed signal — Torquilstone is ours! Think of honor — think of spoil! One effort, and the place is ours! ”

With that he bent his good bow, and sent a shaft right through the breast of one of the men-at-arms, who, under De Bracy’s direction, was loosening a fragment from one of the battlements to precipitate on the heads of Cedric and the Black Knight. A second soldier caught from the hands of the dying man the iron crow, with which he heaved at and had loosened the stone pinnacle, when, receiving an arrow through his head-piece, he dropped from the battlements into the moat a dead man. The men-at-arms were daunted, for no armor seemed proof against the shot of this tremendous archer.

“ Do you give ground, base knaves! ” said De Bracy; “ Mount joye St. Denis! Give me the lever! ”

And, snatching it up, he again assailed the loosened pinnacle, which was of weight enough, if thrown down, not only to destroy the remnant of the draw-bridge which sheltered the two foremost assailants, but also to sink the rude float of planks over which they had crossed. All saw the danger, and the boldest, even the stout Friar himself, avoided setting foot on the raft. Thrice did Locksley bend his shaft against De Bracy,



and thrice did his arrow bound back from the knight's armor of proof.

"Curse on thy Spanish steel-coat!" said Locksley; "had English smith forged it, these arrows had gone through, as if it had been silk or sendal." He then began to call out, "Comrades! friends! noble Cedric! bear back, and let the ruin fall."

His warning voice was unheard, for the din which the knight himself occasioned by his strokes upon the postern would have drowned twenty war trumpets. The faithful Gurth indeed sprung forward on the planked bridge, to warn Cedric of his impending fate, or to share it with him. But his warning would have come too late; the massive pinnacle already tottered, and De Bracy, who still heaved at his task, would have accomplished it, had not the voice of the Templar sounded close in his ear:

"All is lost, De Bracy; the castle burns."

"Thou art mad to say so!" replied the knight.

"It is all in a light flame on the western side. I have striven in vain to extinguish it."

With the stern coolness which formed the basis of his character, Brian de Bois-Guilbert communicated this hideous intelligence, which was not so calmly received by his astonished comrade.

"Saints of Paradise!" said De Bracy; "what is to be done? I vow to St. Nicholas of Limoges a candlestick of pure gold —"

"Spare thy vow," said the Templar, "and mark me. Lead thy men down, as if to a sally; throw the postern gate open — There are but two men who occupy the float, fling them into the moat, and push across for the barbican. I will charge from the main gate, and attack the barbican on the outside; and if we can regain that



post, be assured we shall defend ourselves until we are relieved, or at least till they grant us fair quarter."

"It is well thought upon," said De Bracy; "I will play my part. Templar, thou wilt not fail me?"

"Hand and glove, I will not!" said Bois-Guilbert. "But hasten!"

De Bracy hastily drew his men together, and rushed down to the postern gate, which he caused instantly to be thrown open. But scarce was this done ere the portentous strength of the Black Knight forced his way inward in despite of De Bracy and his followers. Two of the foremost instantly fell, and the rest gave way notwithstanding all their leader's efforts to stop them.

"Dogs!" said De Bracy, "will ye let *two* men win our only pass for safety?"

"He is the devil!" said a veteran man-at-arms, bearing back from the blows of their sable antagonist.

"And if he be the devil," replied De Bracy, "would you fly from him into the mouth of Hell? — the castle burns behind us, villains! — let despair give you courage, or let me forward! I will cope with this champion myself."

And well and chivalrously did De Bracy that day maintain the fame he had acquired in the civil wars of that dreadful period. The vaulted passage to which the postern gave entrance, and in which these two redoubted champions were now fighting hand to hand, rung with the furious blows which they dealt each other, De Bracy with his sword, the Black Knight with his ponderous ax. At length the Norman received a blow which, though its force was partly parried by his shield, for otherwise never more would De Bracy have again moved limb, descended yet with such violence on his crest that he measured his length on the paved floor.



“Yield thee, De Bracy,” said the Black Champion, stooping over him, and holding against the bars of his helmet the fatal poniard with which the knights dispatched their enemies (and which was called the dagger of mercy)—“yield thee, Maurice de Bracy, rescue or no rescue, or thou art but a dead man.”

“I will not yield,” replied De Bracy, faintly, “to an unknown conqueror. Tell me thy name, or work thy pleasure on me—it shall never be said that Maurice de Bracy was prisoner to a nameless churl.”

The Black Knight whispered something into the ear of the vanquished.

“I yield me to be true prisoner, rescue or no rescue,” answered the Norman, exchanging his tone of stern and determined obstinacy for one of deep though sullen submission.

“Go to the barbican,” said the victor, in a tone of authority, “and there wait my further orders.”

“Yet first let me say,” said De Bracy, “what it imports thee to know. Wilfred of Ivanhoe is wounded and a prisoner, and will perish in the burning castle without present help.”

“Wilfred of Ivanhoe!” exclaimed the Black Knight—“prisoner, and perish! The life of every man in the castle shall answer it if a hair of his head be singed—Show me his chamber!”

“Ascend yonder winding stair,” said De Bracy; “it leads to his apartment. Wilt thou not accept my guidance?” he added, in a submissive voice.

“No. To the barbican, and there wait my orders. I trust thee not, De Bracy.”

During this combat and the brief conversation which ensued, Cedric, at the head of a body of men, among whom the Friar was conspicuous, had pushed across





“These two champions were fighting hand to hand.”







the bridge as soon as they saw the postern open, and drove back the dispirited and despairing followers of De Bracy, of whom some asked quarter, some offered vain resistance, and the greater part fled towards the courtyard. De Bracy himself arose from the ground, and cast a sorrowful glance after his conqueror. "He trusts me not!" he repeated; "but have I deserved his trust?" He then lifted his sword from the floor, took off his helmet in token of submission, and, going to the barbican, gave up his sword to Locksley, whom he met by the way.

As the fire augmented, symptoms of it became soon apparent in the chamber where Ivanhoe was watched and tended by the Jewess Rebecca. At length the volumes of smoke which rolled into the apartment, the cries for water, which were heard even above the din of the battle, made them sensible of the progress of this new danger.

"The castle burns," said Rebecca, "it burns! What can we do to save ourselves?"

"Fly, Rebecca, and save thine own life," said Ivanhoe, "for no human aid can avail me."

"I will not fly," answered Rebecca; "we will be saved or perish together. And yet, great God! my father — my father! — what will be his fate?"

At this moment the door of the apartment flew open, and the Templar presented himself — a ghastly figure, for his gilded armor was broken and bloody, and the plume was partly shorn away, partly burnt from his casque. "I have found thee," said he to Rebecca; "once didst thou foil me, but never mortal did so twice."

So saying, he seized on the terrified maiden, who filled



the air with her shrieks, and bore her out of the room in his arms, in spite of her cries, and without regarding the menaces and defiance which Ivanhoe thundered against him. “Hound of the Temple — stain to thine Order — set free the damsel! Traitor of Bois-Guilbert, it is Ivanhoe commands thee! — Villain, I will have thy heart’s blood!”

“I had not found thee, Wilfred,” said the Black Knight, who at that instant entered the apartment, “but for thy shouts.”

“If thou be’st true knight,” said Wilfred, “think not of me — pursue yon ravisher — save the Lady Rowena — look to the noble Cedric!”

“In their turn,” answered he of the Fetterlock, “but thine is first.”

And seizing upon Ivanhoe, he bore him off with as much ease as the Templar had carried off Rebecca, rushed with him to the postern, and, having there delivered his burden to the care of two yeomen, he again entered the castle to assist in the rescue of the other prisoners.

One turret was now in bright flames, which flashed out furiously from window and shot-hole. But in other parts the rage of man still triumphed; for the besiegers pursued the defenders of the castle from chamber to chamber, and satiated in their blood the vengeance which had long animated them against the soldiers of the tyrant Front-de-Bœuf. Most of the garrison resisted to the uttermost — few of them asked quarter — none received it. The air was filled with groans and the clashing of arms — the floors were slippery with the blood of despairing and expiring wretches.

Through this scene of confusion, Cedric rushed in quest of Rowena, while the faithful Gurth, following



him closely through the affray, neglected his own safety while he strove to avert the blows that were aimed at his master. The noble Saxon was so fortunate as to reach his ward's apartment just as she had abandoned all hope of safety, and, with a crucifix clasped in agony to her bosom, sat in expectation of instant death. He committed her to the charge of Gurth, to be conducted in safety to the barbican, the road to which was now cleared of the enemy, and not yet interrupted by the flames. This accomplished, the loyal Cedric hastened in quest of his friend Athelstane, determined, at every risk to himself, to save that last scion of Saxon royalty. But ere Cedric had penetrated as far as the old hall in which he had himself been a prisoner, the inventive genius of Wamba had procured liberation for himself and his companion in adversity.

When the noise of the conflict announced that it was at the hottest, the Jester began to shout, with the utmost power of his lungs, "St. George and the dragon! — bonny St. George for Merry England — the castle is won!" And these sounds he rendered yet more fearful by banging against each other two or three pieces of rusty armor which lay scattered around the hall.

A guard which had been stationed in the outer or ante-room, and whose spirits were already in a state of alarm, took fright at Wamba's clamor, and, leaving the door open behind them, ran to tell the Templar that foemen had entered the old hall. Meantime the prisoners found no difficulty in making their escape into the ante-room, and from thence into the court of the castle, which was now the last scene of contest. Here sat the fierce Templar, mounted on horseback, surrounded by several of the garrison both on horse and foot, who had united their strength to that of this renowned



leader, in order to secure the last chance of safety and retreat which remained to them. The drawbridge had been lowered by his orders, but the passage was beset; for the archers, who had hitherto only annoyed the castle on that side by their missiles, no sooner saw the flames breaking out, and the bridge lowered, than they thronged to the entrance, as well to prevent the escape of the garrison as to secure their own share of booty ere the castle should be burned down. On the other hand, a party of the besiegers, who had entered by the postern, were now issuing out into the courtyard, and attacking with fury the remnant of the defenders, who were thus assaulted on both sides at once.

Animated, however, by despair, and supported by the example of their indomitable leader, the remaining soldiers of the castle fought with the utmost valor; and, being well armed, succeeded more than once in driving back the assailants, though much inferior in numbers. Rebecca, placed on horseback before one of the Templar's Saracen slaves, was in the midst of the little party; and Bois-Guilbert, notwithstanding the confusion of the bloody fray, showed every attention to her safety. Repeatedly he was by her side, and, neglecting his own defense, held before her the fence of his triangular, steel-plated shield; and anon, starting from his position by her, he cried his war-cry, dashed forward, struck to earth the most forward of the assailants, and was on the same instant once more at her bridle rein.

Athelstane, who, as the reader knows, was slothful, but not cowardly, beheld the female form whom the Templar protected thus sedulously, and doubted not that it was Rowena whom the knight was carrying off.

“By the soul of St. Edward,” he said, “I will rescue



her from yonder over-proud knight, and he shall die by my hand! ”

“ Think what you do! ” cried Wamba; “ hasty hand catches frog for fish — by my bauble, yonder is none of my Lady Rowena,—see but her long dark locks! And you without armor too! — bethink you, silk bonnet never kept out steel blade.—Nay, then, if willful will to water, willful must drench. God be with you, most doughty Athelstane! ” he concluded, loosening the hold which he had hitherto kept upon the Saxon’s tunic.

To snatch a mace from the pavement, on which it lay beside one whose dying grasp had just relinquished it, to rush on the Templar’s band, and to strike in quick succession to the right and left, leveling a warrior at each blow, was, for Athelstane’s great strength, now animated with unusual fury, but the work of a single moment; he was soon within two yards of Bois-Guilbert, whom he defied in his loudest tone.

“ Turn, false-hearted Templar! let go her whom thou art unworthy to touch — turn, limb of a band of murdering and hypocritical robbers! ”

“ Dog! ” said the Templar, grinding his teeth, “ I will teach thee to blaspheme the holy Order of the Temple of Zion; ” and with these words, half-wheeling his steed, he made a demi-courbette towards the Saxon, and, rising in the stirrups, so as to take full advantage of the descent of the horse, he discharged a fearful blow upon the head of Athelstane.

Well said Wamba, that silken bonnet keeps out no steel blade! So trenchant was the Templar’s weapon, that it shore asunder, as it had been a willow twig, the tough and plated handle of the mace, which the ill-fated Saxon reared to parry the blow, and, descending on his head, leveled him with the earth.



“ Ha! Beau-seant! ” exclaimed Bois-Guilbert, “ thus be it to the maligners of the Temple knights! ” Taking advantage of the dismay which was spread by the fall of Athelstane, and calling aloud, “ Those who would save themselves, follow me! ” he pushed across the draw-bridge, dispersing the archers who would have intercepted them. He was followed by his Saracens, and by some five or six men-at-arms, who had mounted their horses. The Templar’s retreat was rendered perilous by the numbers of arrows shot off at him and his party; but this did not prevent him from galloping round to the barbican, of which, according to his previous plan, he supposed it possible De Bracy might be in possession.

“ De Bracy! De Bracy! ” he shouted, “ art thou there? ”

“ I am here,” replied De Bracy, “ but I am a prisoner.”

“ Can I rescue thee? ” cried Bois-Guilbert.

“ No,” replied De Bracy; “ I have rendered me, rescue or no rescue. I will be true prisoner. Save thyself — there are hawks abroad — put the seas betwixt you and England; I dare not say more.”

“ Well,” answered the Templar, “ an thou wilt tarry there, remember I have redeemed word and glove. Be the hawks where they will, methinks the walls of the preceptory of Templestowe will be cover sufficient, and thither will I, like heron to her haunt.”

Having thus spoken, he galloped off with his followers.

Those of the castle who had not gotten to horse, still continued to fight desperately with the besiegers, after the departure of the Templar, but rather in despair of quarter than that they entertained any hope of escape. The fire was spreading rapidly through all parts of the castle, when Ulrica, who had first kindled it, appeared



on a turret, in the guise of one of the ancient furies, yelling forth a war-song, such as was of yore raised on the field of battle by the scalds of the yet heathen Saxons.

The towering flames had now surmounted every obstruction, and rose to the evening skies one huge and burning beacon. Tower after tower crashed down, with blazing roof and rafter; and the combatants were driven from the courtyard. The vanquished, of whom very few remained, scattered and escaped into the neighboring wood. The victors, assembling in large bands, gazed with wonder, not unmixed with fear, upon the flames, in which their own ranks and arms glanced dusky red. The maniac figure of the Saxon Ulrica was for a long time visible on the lofty stand she had chosen. At length, with a terrific crash, the whole turret gave way, and she perished in the flames which had consumed her tyrant. An awful pause of horror silenced each murmur of the armed spectators, who, for the space of several minutes, stirred not a finger, save to sign the cross. The voice of Locksley was then heard: "Shout, yeomen! the den of tyrants is no more! Let each bring his spoil to our chosen place of rendezvous at the trysting-tree in the Harthill Walk; for there at break of day will we make just partition among our own bands, together with our worthy allies in this great deed of vengeance."



## CHAPTER XXVII

### PARTING THE SPOIL

DAYLIGHT had dawned upon the glades of the oak forest. The outlaws were all assembled around the trysting-tree in the Harthill Walk, where they had spent the night in refreshing themselves after the fatigues of the siege — some with wine, some with slumber, many with hearing and recounting the events of the day, and computing the heaps of plunder which their success had placed at the disposal of their chief.

The spoils were indeed very large; for, notwithstanding that much was consumed, a great deal of plate, rich armor, and splendid clothing had been secured by the exertions of the dauntless outlaws. Yet so strict were the laws of their society, that no one ventured to appropriate any part of the booty, which was brought into one common mass, to be at the disposal of their leader.

The place of rendezvous was an aged oak; not, however, the same to which Locksley had conducted Gurth and Wamba in the earlier part of the story, but one which was the center of a silvan amphitheater, within half a mile of the demolished castle of Torquilstone. Here Locksley assumed his seat — a throne of turf erected under the twisted branches of the huge oak — and the silvan followers were gathered around him. He assigned to the Black Knight a seat at his right hand, and to Cedric a place upon his left.

“Now, sirs,” said he “who hath seen our chaplain?



where is our curtal Friar? ” No one had seen the Clerk of Copmanhurst. “ Over gods forbode! ” said the outlaw chief, “ I trust the jolly priest hath but abidden by the wine-pot a thought too late. Who saw him since the castle was ta’en? ”

“ I,” quoth the Miller, “ marked him busy about the door of a cellar, swearing by each saint in the calendar he would taste the smack of Front-de-Bœuf’s Gascoigne wine.”

“ Now, the saints, as many as there be of them,” said the captain, “ forefend, lest he has drunk too deep of the wine-butts, and perished by the fall of the castle!— Away, Miller!—take with you enow of men, seek the place where you last saw him—throw water from the moat on the scorching ruins; I will have them removed stone by stone ere I lose my curtal Friar.”

The numbers who hastened to execute this duty, considering that an interesting division of spoil was about to take place, showed how much the troop had at heart the safety of their spiritual father.

“ Meanwhile, let us proceed,” said Locksley; “ for when this bold deed shall be sounded abroad, the bands of De Bracy, of Malvoisin, and other allies of Front-de-Bœuf, will be in motion against us, and it were well for our safety that we retreat from the vicinity. Noble Cedric,” he said, turning to the Saxon, “ that spoil is divided into two portions; do thou make choice of that which best suits thee, to recompense thy people who were partakers with us in this adventure.”

“ Good yeoman,” said Cedric, “ my heart is oppressed with sadness. The noble Athelstane of Coningsburgh is no more—the last sprout of the sainted Confessor! My people, save the few who are now with me, do but tarry my presence to transport his honored remains to



their last mansion. The Lady Rowena is desirous to return to Rotherwood, and must be escorted by a sufficient force. I should, therefore, ere now have left this place; and I waited but to render my thanks to thee and to thy bold yeomen, for the life and honor ye have saved."

"Nay, but," said the chief outlaw, "we did but half the work at most—take of the spoil what may reward your own neighbors and followers."

"I am rich enough to reward them from mine own wealth," answered Cedric.

"And some," said Wamba, "have been wise enough to reward themselves; they do not march off empty-handed altogether."

"They are welcome," said Locksley; "our laws bind none but ourselves."

"But thou, my poor knave," said Cedric, turning about and embracing his Jester, "how shall I reward thee, who feared not to give thy body to chains and death instead of mine? All forsook me, when the poor fool was faithful!"

"Nay," said the Jester, extricating himself from his master's caress, "if you pay my service with the water of your eye, the Jester must weep for company, and then what becomes of his vocation?—But, uncle, if you would indeed pleasure me, I pray you to pardon my playfellow Gurth, who stole a week from your service to bestow it on your son."

"Pardon him!" exclaimed Cedric; "I will both pardon and reward him. Kneel down, Gurth."—The swineherd was in an instant at his master's feet.—"Thrall and bondsman art thou no longer," said Cedric, touching him with a wand; "a lawful freeman art thou in town, and from town, in the forest as in the field. A hide of land



I give to thee in my steads of Walburgham, from me and mine to thee and thine aye and for ever; and God's malison on his head who this gainsays! ”

No longer a serf but a freeman and a land-holder, Gurth sprung upon his feet, and twice bounded aloft to almost his own height from the ground.

“ A smith and a file,” he cried, “ to do away the collar from the neck of a freeman!—Noble master! doubled is my strength by your gift, and doubly will I fight for you!—There is a free spirit in my breast. I am a man changed to myself and all around. Ha, Fangs! ” he continued,—for that faithful cur, seeing his master thus transported, began to jump upon him to express his sympathy,—“ knowest thou thy master still? ”

The tramp of horses was now heard, and the Lady Rowena appeared, surrounded by several riders, and a much stronger party of footmen, who joyfully shook their pikes and clashed their brown-bills for joy of her freedom.

As Rowena bent her steed towards Locksley's seat, that bold yeoman, with all his followers, rose to receive her, as if by a general instinct of courtesy. The blood rose to her cheeks as, courteously waving her hand, and bending so low that her beautiful tresses were for an instant mixed with the flowing mane of her palfrey, she expressed in few but apt words her obligations and her gratitude to Locksley and her other deliverers. “ God bless you, brave men,” she concluded — “ God and Our Lady bless you and requite you for gallantly periling yourselves in the cause of the oppressed! If any of you should hunger, remember Rowena has food—if you should thirst, she has many a butt of wine and brown ale—and if the Normans drive ye from these walks, Rowena has forests of her own, where her gallant deliv-



erers may range at full freedom, and never ranger ask whose arrow hath struck down the deer."

"Thanks, gentle lady," said Locksley — "thanks from my company and myself. But to have saved you requites itself."

Cedric, ere they departed, expressed his peculiar gratitude to the Black Champion, and earnestly entreated him to accompany him to Rotherwood.

"I know," he said, "that ye errant knights desire to carry your fortunes on the point of your lance, and reckon not of land or goods; but war is a changeful mistress, and a home is sometimes desirable even to the champion whose trade is wandering. Thou hast earned one in the halls of Rotherwood, noble knight. Cedric has wealth enough to repair the injuries of fortune, and all he has is his deliverer's. Come, therefore, to Rotherwood, not as a guest, but as a son or brother."

"Cedric has already made me rich," said the Knight; "he has taught me the value of Saxon virtue. To Rotherwood will I come, brave Saxon, and that speedily; but, as now, pressing matters of moment detain me from your halls. Peradventure, when I come thither, I will ask such a boon as will put even thy generosity to the test."

"It is granted ere spoken out," said Cedric, striking his ready hand into the gauntleted palm of the Black Knight — "it is granted already, were it to affect half my fortune."

"Gauge not thy promise so lightly," said the Knight of the Fetterlock; "yet well I hope to gain the boon I shall ask. Meanwhile, adieu."

"I have but to say," added the Saxon, "that, during the funeral rites of the noble Athelstane, I shall be an inhabitant of the halls of his castle of Coningsburgh — They will be open to all who choose to partake of the



funeral banqueting; and, I speak in the name of the noble Edith, mother of the fallen prince, they will never be shut against him who labored so bravely, though unsuccessfully, to save Athelstane from Norman chains and Norman steel.”

Rowena waved a graceful adieu to him of the Fetterlock, the Saxon bade him God speed, and on they moved through a wide glade of the forest.

They had scarce departed, ere a sudden procession moved from under the greenwood branches, swept slowly round the silvan amphitheater, and took the same direction with Rowena and her followers. The priests of a neighboring convent, in expectation of the ample donation, or soul-scat, which Cedric had propined, attended upon the car in which the body of Athelstane was laid.

Again the outlaws arose, and paid the same rude and spontaneous homage to death which they had so lately rendered to beauty; the slow chant and mournful step of the priests brought back to their remembrance such of their comrades as had fallen in the yesterday's affray. But such recollections dwell not long with those who lead a life of danger and enterprise, and ere the sound of the death hymn had died on the wind, the outlaws were again busied in the distribution of their spoil.

“Valiant knight,” said Locksley to the Black Champion, “without whose good heart and mighty arm our enterprise must altogether have failed, will it please you to take from that mass of spoil whatever may best serve to pleasure you, and to remind you of this my Trysting-tree?”

“I accept the offer,” said the Knight, “as frankly as it is given; and I ask permission to dispose of Sir Maurice de Bracy at my own pleasure.”

“He is thine already,” said Locksley, “and well for



him! else the tyrant had graced the highest bough of this oak, with as many of his Free Companions as we could gather, hanging thick as acorns around him.— But he is thy prisoner, and he is safe, though he had slain my father.”

“ De Bracy,” said the Knight, “ thou art free — depart. He whose prisoner thou art scorns to take mean revenge for what is past. But beware of the future, lest a worse thing befall thee.— Maurice de Bracy, I say BEWARE! ”

De Bracy bowed low and in silence, and was about to withdraw, when the yeomen burst at once into a shout of execration and derision. The proud knight instantly stopped, turned back, folded his arms, drew up his form to its full height, and exclaimed, “ Peace, ye yelping curs! De Bracy scorns your censure as he would disdain your applause. To your brakes and caves, ye outlawed thieves! and be silent when aught knightly or noble is but spoken within a league of your fox-earths.”

This ill-timed defiance might have procured for De Bracy a volley of arrows, but for the hasty and imperative interference of the outlaw Chief. Meanwhile, the knight caught a horse by the rein, for several which had been taken in the stables of Front-de-Bœuf stood accoutered around, and were a valuable part of the booty. He threw himself upon the saddle, and galloped off through the wood.

When the bustle occasioned by this incident was somewhat composed, the chief outlaw took from his neck the rich horn and baldric which he had recently gained at the strife of archery near Ashby.

“ Noble knight,” he said to him of the Fetterlock, “ if you disdain not to grace by your acceptance a bugle



which an English yeoman has once worn, this I will pray you to keep as a memorial of your gallant bearing; and if ye have aught to do, and, as happeneth oft to a gallant knight, ye chance to be hard bested, in any forest between Trent and Tees, wind three mots upon the horn thus, *Wa-sa-hoa!* and it may well chance ye shall find helpers and rescue."

He then gave breath to the bugle, and winded once and again the call which he described, until the Knight had caught the notes.

"Many thanks for the gift, bold yeoman," said the Knight; "and better help than thine and thy rangers' would I never seek, were it at my utmost need." And then in his turn he winded the call till all the greenwood rang.

"Well blown and clearly," said the yeoman; "be-shrew me an thou knowest not as much of woodcraft as of war! Thou hast been a striker of deer in thy day, I warrant.—Comrades, mark these three mots—it is the call of the Knight of the Fetterlock; and he who hears it, and hastens not to serve him at his need, I will have him scourged out of our band with his own bow-string."

"Long live our leader!" shouted the yeomen, "and long live the Black Knight of the Fetterlock! May he soon use our service to prove how readily it will be paid."

Locksley now proceeded to the distribution of the spoil, which he performed with the most laudable impartiality. A tenth part of the whole was set apart for the church and for pious uses; a portion was next allotted to a sort of public treasury; a part was assigned to the widows and children of those who had fallen, or to be expended in masses for the souls of such as had left



no surviving family. The rest was divided among the outlaws, according to their rank and merit.

When each had taken his own proportion of the booty, and while the treasurer, accompanied by four tall yeomen, was transporting that belonging to the state to some place of concealment or of security, the portion devoted to the church still remained unappropriated.

“ I would,” said the leader, “ we could hear tidings of our joyous chaplain — he was never wont to be absent when meat was to be blessed, or spoil to be parted; and it is his duty to take care of these the tithes of our successful enterprise.”

While he thus spoke, a loud shot among the yeomen announced the arrival of him for whom they feared, as they learned from the stentorian voice of the Friar himself, long before they saw his burly person.

“ Make room, my merry men!” he exclaimed — “ room for your godly father and his prisoner. Cry welcome once more.— I come, noble leader, like an eagle, with my prey in my clutch.” And, making his way through the ring, amid the laughter of all around, he appeared in majestic triumph, his huge partisan in one hand, and in the other a halter, one end of which was fastened to the neck of the unfortunate Isaac of York, who, bent down by sorrow and terror, was dragged on by the victorious priest, who shouted aloud, “ Where is Allan-a-Dale, to chronicle me in a ballad, or if it were but a lay? — By St. Hermangild, the jingling crowder is ever out of the way where there is an apt theme for exalting valor!”

“ Curtal Priest,” said the captain, “ thou hast been at a wet mass this morning, as early as it is. In the name of St. Nicholas, whom hast thou got here?”

“ A captive to my sword and to my lance, noble cap-



tain," replied the Clerk of Copmanhurst, "to my bow and to my halberd, I should rather say. By St. Dunstan! I found him where I sought for better ware! I did step into the cellarage to see what might be rescued there; for though a cup of burnt wine, with spice, be an evening's draught for an emperor, it were waste, methought, to let so much good liquor be mulled at once; and I had caught up one runlet of sack, and was coming to call more aid among these lazy knaves, who are ever to seek when a good deed is to be done, when I was avised of a strong door.—Aha! thought I, here is the choicest juice of all in this secret crypt; and the knave butler, being disturbed in his vocation, hath left the key in the door — In therefore I went, and found just nought besides a commodity of rusted chains and this dog of a Jew, who presently rendered himself my prisoner, rescue or no rescue. I did but refresh myself after the fatigue of the action with the unbeliever, with one humming cup of sack, and was proceeding to lead forth my captive, when, crash after crash, down toppled the masonry of another tower (marry beshrew their hands that built it not the firmer!) and blocked up the passage. The roar of one falling tower followed another — I gave up thought of life; and, deeming it a dishonor to one of my profession to pass out of this world in company with a Jew, I heaved up my halberd to beat his brains out; but I took pity on his gray hairs, and judged it better to lay down the partisan, and take up my spiritual weapon for his conversion. And truly, by the blessing of St. Dunstan, the seed has been sown in good soil; only that, with speaking to him of mysteries through the whole night, and being in a manner fasting (for the few draughts of sack which I sharpened my wits with, were not worth marking), my head is well-nigh dizzied, I trow. But I was clean ex-



hausted. Gilbert and Wibbald know in what state they found me — quite and clean exhausted.”

“ We can bear witness,” said Gilbert; “ for when we had cleared away the ruin, and by St. Dunstan’s help lighted upon the dungeon stair, we found the runlet of sack half-empty, the Jew half-dead, and the Friar more than half — exhausted, as he calls it.”

“ Ye be knaves! ye lie! ” retorted the offended Friar; “ it was you and your gormandizing companions that drank up the sack, and called it your morning draught. I am a pagan, an I kept it not for the captain’s own throat. But what recks it? The Jew is converted, and understands all I have told him, very nearly, if not altogether, as well as myself.”

“ Jew,” said the captain, “ is this true? Hast thou renounced thine unbelief? ”

“ May I so find mercy in your eyes,” said the Jew, “ as I know not one word which the reverend prelate spake to me all this fearful night. Alas! I am an aged, beggar’d man — I fear me a childless — have ruth on me, and let me go! ”

“ Nay,” said the Friar, “ if thou dost retract vows made in favor of holy church, thou must do penance.”

Accordingly, he raised his halberd, and would have laid the staff of it lustily on the Jew’s shoulders, had not the Black Knight stopped the blow, and thereby transferred the holy clerk’s resentment to himself.

“ By St. Thomas of Kent,” said he, “ an I buckle to my gear, I will teach thee, sir lazy lover, to mell with thine own matters, in spite of thine iron case there! ”

“ Nay, be not wroth with me,” said the Knight; “ thou knowest I am thy sworn friend and comrade.”

“ I know no such thing,” answered the Friar; “ and I defy thee for a meddling coxcomb! ”



“Nay, but,” said the Knight, who seemed to take a pleasure in provoking his quondam host, “hast thou forgotten how for my sake (for I say nothing of the temptation of the flagon and the pasty) thou didst break thy vow of fast and vigil?”

“Truly, friend,” said the Friar, clenching his huge fist, “I will bestow a buffet on thee.”

“I accept no such presents,” said the Knight; “I am content to take thy cuff as a loan, but I will repay thee with usury as deep as ever thy prisoner there exacted in his traffic.”

“I will prove that presently,” said the Friar.

“Hola!” cried the captain, “what art thou after, mad Friar? brawling beneath our trysting-tree?”

“No brawling,” said the Knight; “it is but a friendly interchange of courtesy. Friar, strike an thou darest — I will stand thy blow, if thou wilt stand mine.”

“Thou hast the advantage with that iron pot on thy head,” said the churchman; “but have at thee — Down thou goest, an thou wert Goliath of Gath in his brazen helmet.”

The Friar bared his brawny arm up to the elbow, and, putting his full strength to the blow, gave the Knight a buffet that might have felled an ox. But his adversary stood firm as a rock. A loud shout was uttered by all the yeomen around; for the clerk’s cuff was proverbial among them, and there were few who, in jest or earnest, had not had occasion to know its vigor. “Now, Priest,” said the Knight, pulling off his gauntlet, “if I had vantage on my head, I will have none on my hand; stand fast as a true man.”

“I have given my cheek to the smiter,” said the Priest; “an thou canst stir me from the spot, fellow, I will freely bestow on thee the Jew’s ransom.”



So spoke the burly Priest, assuming, on his part, high defiance. But who may resist his fate? The buffet of the Knight was given with such strength and good-will that the Friar rolled head over heels upon the plain, to the great amazement of all the spectators. But he arose neither angry nor crestfallen.

“ Brother,” said he to the Knight, “ thou shouldst have used thy strength with more discretion. I had mumbled but a lame mass an thou hadst broken my jaw, for the piper plays ill that wants the nether chops. Nevertheless, there is my hand, in friendly witness that I will exchange no more cuffs with thee, having been a loser by the barter. End now all unkindness. Let us put the Jew on ransom, since the leopard will not change his spots, and a Jew he will continue to be.”

“ Were many of Front-de-Bœuf’s men taken? ” demanded the Black Knight.

“ None of note enough to be put to ransom,” answered the captain; “ a set of paltry fellows there were, whom we dismissed to find them a new master; enough had been done for revenge and profit; the bunch of them were not worth a cardecu. But yonder prisoner is better booty, an I may judge by his horse-gear and wearing apparel — Here cometh the worthy prelate, as pert as a pyet.” And between two yeomen was brought before the silvan throne of the outlaw chief our old friend, Prior Aymer of Jorvaulx.



## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE RANSOM OF THE PRIOR AND THE JEW

THE captive Abbot's features and manners exhibited a whimsical mixture of offended pride, and deranged foppery, and bodily terror.

“Why, how now, my masters?” said he, with a voice in which all three emotions were blended. “Be ye Turks or Christians, that handle a churchman? Ye have plundered my mails, torn my cope of curious cut lace, which might have served a cardinal. Another in my place would have been at his ‘I will excommunicate you’; but I am placable, and if ye order forth my palfreys, release my brethren, and restore my mails, tell down with all speed an hundred crowns to be expended in masses at the high altar of Jorvaulx Abbey, and make your vow to eat no venison until next Pentecost, it may be you shall hear little more of this mad frolic.”

“Holy father,” said the chief Outlaw, “it grieves me to think that you have met with such usage from any of my followers as calls for your fatherly reprehension.”

“Usage!” echoed the priest, encouraged by the mild tone of the silvan leader; “it were usage fit for no hound of good race — much less for a Christian — far less for a priest — and least of all for the prior of the holy community of Jorvaulx. Here is a profane and drunken minstrel, called Allan-a-Dale, who has menaced me with corporal punishment — nay, with death itself, an I pay



not down four hundred crowns of ransom, to the boot of all the treasure he hath already robbed me of — gold chains and gymmal rings to an unknown value; besides what is broken and spoiled among their rude hands, such as my pouncet-box and silver crissing-tongs.”

“It is impossible that Allan-a-Dale can have thus treated a man of your reverend bearing,” replied the Captain.

“It is true as the gospel of St. Nicodemus,” said the Prior; “he swore, with many a cruel north-country oath, that he would hang me up on the highest tree in the greenwood.”

“Did he so in very deed? Nay, then, reverend father, I think you had better comply with his demands — for Allan-a-Dale is the very man to abide by his word when he has so pledged it.”

“You do but jest with me,” said the astounded Prior, with a forced laugh; “and I love a good jest with all my heart. But, ha! ha! ha! when the mirth has lasted the livelong night, it is time to be grave in the morning.”

“And I am as grave as a father confessor,” replied the Outlaw; “you must pay a round ransom, Sir Prior, or your convent is likely to be called to a new election; for your place will know you no more.”

“Well, friend,” said the Abbot, peevishly, “what ransom am I to pay for walking on Watling Street without having fifty men at my back?”

“Were it not well,” said the lieutenant of the gang apart to the Captain, “that the Prior should name the Jew’s ransom, and the Jew name the Prior’s?”

“Thou art a mad knave,” said the Captain, “but thy plan transcends! — Here, Jew, step forth — Look at that holy Father Aymer, Prior of the rich Abbey of



Jorvaulx, and tell us at what ransom we should hold him? — Thou knowest the income of his convent, I warrant thee.”

“ Oh, assuredly,” said Isaac. “ I have trafficked with the good fathers, and bought wheat and barley, and fruits of the earth, and also much wool. Oh, it is a rich abbey, and they do live upon the fat, and drink the sweet wines upon the lees, these good fathers of Jorvaulx.”

“ All this helps nothing,” said the leader. “ Isaac, pronounce what he may pay, without flaying both hide and hair.”

“ An six hundred crowns,” said Isaac, “ the good Prior might well pay to your honored valors, and never sit less soft in his stall.”

“ Six hundred crowns,” said the leader, gravely; “ I am contented — thou hast well spoken, Isaac — six hundred crowns. It is a sentence, Sir Prior.”

“ A sentence! — a sentence!” exclaimed the band; “ Solomon had not done it better.”

“ Thou hearest thy doom, Prior,” said the leader.

“ Ye are mad, my masters,” said the Prior; “ where am I to find such a sum? If I sell the very pyx and candlesticks on the altar at Jorvaulx, I shall scarce raise the half; and it will be necessary for that purpose that I go to Jorvaulx myself; ye may retain as borrows my two priests.”

“ That will be but blind trust,” said the Outlaw; “ we will retain thee, Prior, and send them to fetch thy ransom. Thou shalt not want a cup of wine and a collop of venison the while.”

“ Or, if so please you,” said Isaac, willing to curry favor with the outlaws, “ I can send to York for the six hundred crowns, out of certain monies in my hands, if



so be that the most reverend Prior present will grant me a quittance."

"He shall grant thee whatever thou dost list, Isaac," said the Captain; "and thou shalt lay down the redemption money for Prior Aymer as well as for thyself."

"For myself! ah, courageous sirs," said the Jew, "I am a broken and impoverished man; a beggar's staff must be my portion through life, supposing I were to pay you fifty crowns."

"The Prior shall judge of that matter," replied the Captain—"How say you, Father Aymer? Can the Jew afford a good ransom?"

"*Can* he afford a ransom?" answered the Prior. "Is he not Isaac of York, rich enough to redeem the captivity of the ten tribes of Israel? But since you require me to put a price upon this caitiff, I tell you openly that ye will wrong yourselves if you take from him a penny under a thousand crowns."

"A sentence!—a sentence!" exclaimed the chief Outlaw.

"A sentence!—a sentence!" shouted his assessors; "the Christian has shown his good nurture, and dealt with us more generously than the Jew."

"The God of my fathers help me!" said the Jew; "will ye bear to the ground an impoverished creature? I am this day childless, and will ye deprive me of the means of livelihood?"

"Was not thy daughter dark-haired?" said one of the outlaws; "and wore she not a veil of twisted sendal, broidered with silver?"

"She did!—she did!" said the old man, trembling with eagerness, as formerly with fear. "The blessing of Jacob be upon thee! Canst thou tell me aught of her safety?"



“ It was she, then,” said the yeoman, “ who was carried off by the proud Templar, when he broke through our ranks on yester-even. I had drawn my bow to send a shaft after him, but spared him even for the sake of the damsel, who I feared might take harm from the arrow.”

“ Oh! ” answered the Jew, “ I would to God thou hadst shot, though the arrow had pierced her bosom! Ichabod! Ichabod! the glory hath departed from my house! ”

“ Friends,” said the Chief, looking round, “ the old man is but a Jew, natheless his grief touches me.— Deal uprightly with us, Isaac — will paying this ransom of a thousand crowns leave thee altogether penniless? ”

Isaac, recalled to think of his worldly goods, the love of which, by dint of inveterate habit, contended even with his parental affection, grew pale, stammered, and could not deny there might be some small surplus.

“ Well, go to, what though there be,” said the Outlaw, “ we will not reckon with thee too closely. Without treasure thou mayest as well hope to redeem thy child from the clutches of Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert as to shoot a stag-royal with a headless shaft.— We will take thee at the same ransom with Prior Aymer, or rather at one hundred crowns lower, which hundred crowns shall be mine own peculiar loss, and not light upon this worshipful community; and so we shall avoid the heinous offense of rating a Jew merchant as high as a Christian prelate, and thou wilt have six hundred crowns remaining to treat for thy daughter’s ransom. Templars love the glitter of silver shekels. Hasten to make thy crowns chink in the ear of De Bois-Guilbert. Thou wilt find him, as our scouts have brought notice, at the next Preceptory house of his Order.”



“ Jew,” said Prior Aymer, “ I grieve for the maiden, for she is of fair and comely countenance — I beheld her in the lists of Ashby. Also Brian de Bois-Guilbert is one with whom I may do much — bethink thee how thou mayest deserve my good word with him.”

“ Alas! alas!” said the Jew, “ on every hand the spoilers arise against me — I am given as a prey unto the Assyrian, and a prey unto him of Egypt.” Isaac groaned deeply, and began to wring his hands, and to relapse into his state of desolation and despair. But the leader of the yeomen led him aside.

“ Advise thee well, Isaac,” said Locksley, “ what thou wilt do in this matter; my counsel to thee is to make a friend of this churchman. He is vain, Isaac, and he is covetous; at least he needs money to supply his profusion. Thou canst easily gratify his greed; for think not that I am blinded by thy pretexts of poverty. I am intimately acquainted, Isaac, with the very iron chest in which thou dost keep thy money-bags.— What! know I not the great stone beneath the apple tree, that leads into the vaulted chamber under thy garden at York?” The Jew grew as pale as death. “ But fear nothing from me,” continued the yeoman, “ for we are of old acquainted. Dost thou not remember the sick yeoman whom thy fair daughter Rebecca redeemed from the gyves at York, and kept in thy house till his health was restored, when thou didst dismiss him recovered, and with a piece of money? Usurer as thou art, thou didst never place coin at better interest than that poor silver mark, for it has this day saved thee five hundred crowns.”

“ And thou art he whom we called Diccon Bend-the-Bow,” said Isaac; “ I thought ever I knew the accent of thy voice.”



“ I am Bend-the-Bow,” said the Captain, “ and Locksley, and have a good name besides all these.”

“ But thou art mistaken, good Bend-the-Bow, concerning that same vaulted apartment. So help me heaven, as there is nought in it but some merchandises which I will gladly part with to you — one hundred yards of Lincoln green to make doublets to thy men, and a hundred staves of Spanish yew to make bows, and one hundred silken bowstrings, tough, round, and sound — these will I send thee for thy good-will, honest Diccon, an thou wilt keep silence about the vault, my good Diccon.”

“ Silent as a dormouse,” said the Outlaw; “ and never trust me but I am grieved for thy daughter. But I may not help it. The Templar’s lances are too strong for my archery in the open field — they would scatter us like dust. Had I but known it was Rebecca when she was borne off, something might have been done; but now thou must needs proceed by policy. Come, shall I treat for thee with the Prior? ”

“ In God’s name, Diccon, an thou canst, aid me to recover the child of my bosom! ”

“ Do not thou interrupt me with thine ill-timed avarice,” said the Outlaw, “ and I will deal with him in thy behalf.”

He then turned from the Jew, who followed him, however, as closely as his shadow.

“ Prior Aymer,” said the Captain, “ come apart with me under this tree. I have heard thou dost love a brace of good dogs and a fleet horse, and it may well be that, loving things which are costly to come by, thou hatest not a purse of gold. But I have never heard that thou didst love oppression or cruelty.—Now, here is Isaac willing to give thee the means of pleasure and pastime in a bag containing one hundred marks of silver,



if thy intercession with thine ally the Templar shall avail to procure the freedom of his daughter."

"And what pledge am I to have for all this?" said the Prior.

"When Isaac returns successful through your mediation," said the Outlaw, "I swear by St. Hubert, I will see that he pays thee the money in good silver, or I will reckon with him for it in such sort, he had better have paid twenty such sums."

"Well then, Jew," said Aymer, "since I must needs meddle in this matter, let me have the use of thy writing-tablets."

The Prior sat down, and at great leisure indicted an epistle to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, and having carefully sealed up the tablets, delivered them to the Jew, saying: "This will be thy safe-conduct to the Preceptory of Templestowe, and, as I think, is most likely to accomplish the delivery of thy daughter, if it be well backed with proffers of advantage and commodity at thine own hand; for, trust me well, the good knight Bois-Guilbert is of their confraternity that do nought for nought."

"Well, Prior," said the Outlaw, "I will detain thee no longer here than to give the Jew a quittance for the six hundred crowns at which thy ransom is fixed—I accept of him for my paymaster; and if I hear that ye boggle at allowing him in his accompts the sum so paid by him, St. Mary refuse me, and I burn not the abbey over thine head, though I hang ten years the sooner!"

With a much worse grace than that wherewith he had penned the letter to Bois-Guilbert, the Prior wrote an acquittance, discharging Isaac of York of six hundred crowns, advanced to him in his need for acquittal of his ransom, and faithfully promising to hold true compt with him for that sum.



The Prior rode off with considerably less pomp, and in a much more apostolical condition, so far as worldly matters were concerned, than he had exhibited before this encounter.

It remained that the Jew should produce some security for the ransom which he was to pay on the Prior's account, as well as upon his own. He gave, accordingly, an order sealed with his signet, to a brother of his tribe at York, requiring him to pay to the bearer the sum of a thousand crowns, and to deliver certain merchandises specified in the note.

“ My brother Sheva,” he said, groaning deeply, “ hath the key of my warehouses.”

“ And of the vaulted chamber,” whispered Locksley.

“ No, no — may Heaven forefend! ” said Isaac; “ evil is the hour that let any one whomsoever into that secret! ”

“ It is safe with me,” said the Outlaw, “ so be that this thy scroll produce the sum therein nominated and set down.— But what now, Isaac? art dead? art stupefied? hath the payment of a thousand crowns put thy daughter's peril out of thy mind? ”

The Jew started to his feet: “ No, Diccon, no — I will presently set forth.— Farewell, thou whom I may not call good, and dare not and will not call evil.”

Yet, ere Isaac departed, the outlaw Chief bestowed on him this parting advice: “ Be liberal of thine offers, Isaac, and spare not thy purse for thy daughter's safety. Credit me, that the gold thou shalt spare in her cause will hereafter give thee as much agony as if it were poured molten down thy throat.”

Isaac acquiesced with a deep groan, and set forth on his journey, accompanied by two tall foresters, who were to be his guides, and also his guards, through the wood.



The Black Knight, who had seen with no small interest these various proceedings, now took his leave of the Outlaw in turn; nor could he avoid expressing his surprise at having witnessed so much of civil policy amongst persons cast out from all the ordinary protection and influence of the laws.

“ Good fruit, Sir Knight,” said the yeoman, “ will sometimes grow on a sorry tree; and evil times are not always productive of evil alone and unmixed. You are welcome to form your judgment of me, and I may use my conjectures touching you, though neither of our shafts may hit the mark they are shot at.”

“ It may be we shall meet hereafter with less of concealment on either side,” said the Knight.—“ Meanwhile we part friends, do we not? ”

“ There is my hand upon it,” said Locksley; “ and I will call it the hand of a true Englishman, though an outlaw for the present.”

“ And there is mine in return,” said the Knight, “ and I hold it honored by being clasped with yours. For he that does good, having the unlimited power to do evil, deserves praise not only for the good which he performs, but for the evil which he forbears. Fare thee well, gallant Outlaw! ”

Thus parted that fair fellowship; and he of the Fetterlock, mounting upon his strong war-horse, rode off through the forest.



## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE TRIAL OF REBECCA

THE ponderous castle-bell of the Preceptory of Templestowe had tolled the point of noon, when Rebecca heard a trampling of feet upon the private stair which led to her place of confinement. The door of the chamber was unlocked, and Conrade Mont-Fitchet and the Preceptor Malvoisin entered, attended by four warders clothed in black, and bearing halberds.

“ Daughter of an accursed race ! ” said the Preceptor, “ arise and follow us. ”

“ Whither, ” said Rebecca, “ and for what purpose ? ”

“ Damsel, ” answered Conrade, “ it is not for thee to question, but to obey. Nevertheless, be it known to thee that thou art to be brought before the tribunal of the Grand Master of our Holy Order, there to answer for thine offenses. ”

“ May the God of Abraham be praised ! ” said Rebecca, folding her hands devoutly ; “ the name of a judge, though an enemy to my people, is to me as the name of a protector. Most willingly do I follow thee ; permit me only to wrap my veil around my head. ”

They descended the stair with slow and solemn step, traversed a long gallery, and entered the great hall. The lower part of this apartment was filled with squires and yeomen, who made way, not without some difficulty, for Rebecca to move forward to the seat appointed for her. As she passed through the crowd, her arms folded



and her head depressed, a scrap of paper was thrust into her hand, which she received almost unconsciously, and continued to hold without examining its contents.

The tribunal erected for the trial of the innocent and unhappy Rebecca, occupied the dais or elevated part of the upper end of the great hall. On an elevated seat, directly before the accused, sat the Grand Master of the Temple, in full and ample robes of flowing white, holding in his hand the mystic staff which bore the symbol of the Order. At his feet was placed a table, occupied by two scribes, chaplains of the Order, whose duty it was to reduce to formal record the proceedings of the day. The Preceptors, of whom there were four present, occupied seats lower in height and somewhat drawn back behind that of their superior; and the knights who enjoyed no such rank in the Order were placed on benches still lower. Behind them, but still upon the dais or elevated portion of the hall, stood the esquires of the Order, in white dresses of an inferior quality.

The remaining and lower part of the hall was filled with guards, holding partisans, and with other attendants whom curiosity had drawn thither, to see at once a Grand Master and a Jewish sorceress. By far the greater part of those inferior persons were, in one rank or other, connected with the Order; but peasants from the neighboring country were not refused admittance.

The Grand Master glanced his eye slowly around the circle, and observed that the seat of one of the Preceptors was vacant. Brian de Bois-Guilbert, by whom it had been occupied, had left his place, and was now standing near the extreme corner of one of the benches occupied by the Knights Companions of the Temple, one hand extending his long mantle, so as in some degree to hide his face; while the other held his cross-handled sword, with



the point of which, sheathed as it was, he was slowly drawing lines upon the oaken floor.

“ Unhappy man ! ” said the Grand Master, after favoring him with a glance of compassion. “ Thou seest, Conrade, how this holy work distresses him. Seest thou he cannot look upon us ; he cannot look upon her ; and who knows by what impulse from his tormentor his hand forms these cabalistic lines upon the floor ? It may be our life and safety are thus aimed at ; but we spit at and defy the foul enemy . ”

The Grand Master then raised his voice and addressed the assembly. “ Reverend and valiant men, Knights, Preceptors, and Companions of this Holy Order, my brethren and my children ! — you also, well-born and pious esquires, who aspire to wear this Holy Cross ! — and you also, Christian brethren, of every degree ! — be it known to you, that we have summoned to our presence a Jewish woman, by name Rebecca, daughter of Isaac of York — a woman infamous for sorceries and for witcheries ; whereby she hath maddened the blood, and besotted the brain, not of a churl, but of a Knight — not of a Knight Companion, but of a Preceptor of our Order, first in honor as in place. Our brother, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, is well known to ourselves, and to all degrees who now hear me, as a true and zealous champion of the Cross, by whose arm many deeds of valor have been wrought in the Holy Land. Neither have our brother’s sagacity and prudence been less in repute among his brethren than his valor and discipline ; insomuch that knights, both in eastern and western lands, have named De Bois-Guilbert as one who may well be put in nomination as successor to this baton, when it shall please Heaven to release us from the toil of bearing it. If we were told that such a man, so honored, and so honorable,



suddenly casting away regard for his character, his vows, his brethren, and his prospects, had associated to himself a Jewish damsel, defended her person in preference to his own, and, finally, was so utterly blinded and besotted by his folly, as to bring her even to one of our own Preceptories, what should we say but that the noble knight was possessed by some evil demon, or influenced by some wicked spell? — If we could suppose it otherwise, think not rank, valor, high repute, or any earthly consideration, should prevent us from visiting him with punishment, that the evil thing might be removed. Brian de Bois-Guilbert should be cut off and cast out from our congregation, were he the right hand and right eye thereof.”

He paused. A low murmur went through the assembly, who anxiously waited what the Grand Master was next to propose.

“Such,” he said, “and so great should indeed be the punishment of a Knight Templar who willfully offended against the rules of his Order in such weighty points. But if, by means of charms and of spells, Satan had obtained dominion over the Knight, we are then rather to lament than chastise his backsliding; and, imposing on him only such penance as may purify him from his iniquity, we are to turn the full edge of our indignation upon the accursed instrument, which had so well-nigh occasioned his utter falling away.—Stand forth, therefore, and bear witness, ye who have witnessed these unhappy doings, that we may judge of the sum and bearing thereof; and judge whether our justice may be satisfied with the punishment of this infidel woman, or if we must go on, with a bleeding heart, to the further proceeding against our brother.”

Several witnesses were called upon to prove the risks to which Bois-Guilbert exposed himself in endeavoring



to save Rebecca from the blazing castle, and his neglect of his personal defense in attending to her safety. The men gave these details with the exaggeration common to vulgar minds which have been strongly excited by any remarkable event. Thus the dangers which Bois-Guilbert surmounted, in themselves sufficiently great, became portentous in their narrative.

The Preceptor of Templestowe was then called on to describe the manner in which Bois-Guilbert and the Jewess arrived at the Preceptory. The evidence of Malvoisin was skillfully guarded. But while he apparently studied to spare the feelings of Bois-Guilbert, he threw in, from time to time, such hints as seemed to infer that he labored under some temporary alienation of mind.

“ Were it not well, brethren,” said the Grand Master, “ that we examine something into the former life and conversation of this woman, especially that we may discover whether she be one likely to use magical charms and spells, since the truths which we have heard may well incline us to suppose that in this unhappy course our erring brother has been acted upon by some infernal enticement and delusion? ”

Herman of Goodalricke was the fourth Preceptor present; the other three were Conrade, Malvoisin, and Bois-Guilbert himself. Herman was an ancient warrior, whose face was marked with scars inflicted by the saber of the Moslemah, and had great rank and consideration among his brethren. He arose and bowed to the Grand Master, who instantly granted him license of speech. “ I would crave to know, most reverend father, of our valiant brother, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, what he says to these wondrous accusations? ”

Bois-Guilbert made an effort to suppress his rising



scorn and indignation, the expression of which, he was well aware, would little avail him. "Brian de Bois-Guilbert," he answered, "replies not, most reverend father, to such wild and vague charges. If his honor be impeached, he will defend it with his body, and with that sword which has often fought for Christendom."

"We forgive thee, Brother Brian," said the Grand Master; "though that thou hast boasted thy warlike achievements before us is a glorifying of thine own deeds, and cometh of the Enemy, who tempteth us to exalt our own worship. But thou hast our pardon, judging thou speakest less of thine own suggestion than from the impulse of him whom, by Heaven's leave, we will quell and drive forth from our assembly. And now," pursued the Grand Master, "since our Brother of Goodalricke's question has been thus imperfectly answered, pursue we our quest, brethren, and with our patron's assistance we will search to the bottom this mystery of iniquity. Let those who have aught to witness of the life and conversation of this Jewish woman stand forth before us."

There was a bustle in the lower part of the hall, and when the Grand Master inquired the reason, it was replied, there was in the crowd a bedridden man, whom the prisoner had restored to the perfect use of his limbs, by a miraculous balsam.

The poor peasant, a Saxon by birth, was dragged forward to the bar, terrified at the penal consequences which he might have incurred by the guilt of having been cured of the palsy by a Jewish damsel. Perfectly cured he certainly was not, for he supported himself forward on crutches to give evidence. Most unwilling was his testimony, and given with many tears; but he admitted that two years since, when residing at York, he was suddenly



afflicted with a sore disease, while laboring for Isaac the rich Jew, in his vocation of a joiner; that he had been unable to stir from his bed until the remedies applied by Rebecca's directions, and especially a warming and spicy-smelling balsam, had in some degree restored him to the use of his limbs. Moreover, he said, she had given him a pot of that precious ointment, and furnished him with a piece of money withal, to return to the house of his father, near to Templestowe. "And may it please your gracious Reverence," said the man, "I cannot think the damsel meant harm by me, though she hath the ill hap to be a Jewess; for even when I used her remedy, I said the Pater and the Creed, and it never operated a whit less kindly."

"Peace, slave," said the Grand Master. "I tell thee, the fiend can impose diseases for the very purpose of removing them, in order to bring into credit some diabolical fashion of cure. Hast thou that unguent of which thou speakest?"

The peasant, fumbling in his bosom with a trembling hand, produced a small box, bearing some Hebrew characters on the lid, which was, with most of the audience, a sure proof that the devil had stood apothecary. Beaumanoir, after crossing himself, took the box into his hand, and, learned in most of the Eastern tongues, read with ease the motto on the lid: "The Lion of the Tribe of Judah hath conquered." "Strange powers of Sathanas," said he, "which can convert Scripture into blasphemy, mingling poison with our necessary food! — Is there no leech here who can tell us the ingredients of this mystic unguent?"

Two mediciners, as they called themselves, the one a monk, the other a barber, appeared, and avouched they knew nothing of the materials, excepting that they sa-



vored of myrrh and camphire, which they took to be Oriental herbs. But with the true professional hatred to a successful practitioner of their art, they insinuated that, since the medicine was beyond their own knowledge, it must necessarily have been compounded from an unlawful and magical pharmacopœia. When this medical research was ended, the Saxon peasant desired humbly to have back the medicine which he had found so salutary; but the Grand Master frowned severely at the request. "What is thy name, fellow?" said he to the cripple.

"Higg, the son of Snell," answered the peasant.

"Then, Higg, son of Snell," said the Grand Master, "I tell thee, it is better to be bedridden than to accept the benefit of unbelievers' medicine that thou mayest arise and walk; better to despoil infidels of their treasure by the strong hand than to accept of them benevolent gifts, or do them service for wages. Go thou, and do as I have said."

"Alack," said the peasant, "an it shall not displease your Reverence, the lesson comes too late for me, for I am but a maimed man; but I will tell my two brethren, who serve the rich rabbi Nathan ben Samuel, that your mastership says it is more lawful to rob him than to render him faithful service."

"Out with the prating villain!" said Beaumanoir, who was not prepared to refute this practical application of his general maxim.

Higg, the son of Snell, withdrew into the crowd, but, interested in the fate of his benefactress, lingered until he should learn her doom, even at the risk of again encountering the frown of that severe judge, the terror of which withered his very heart within him.

At this period of the trial, the Grand Master com-



manded Rebecca to unveil herself. Opening her lips for the first time, she replied patiently, but with dignity, that it was not the wont of the daughters of her people to uncover their faces when alone in an assembly of strangers. The sweet tones of her voice, and the softness of her reply, impressed on the audience a sentiment of pity and sympathy. But Beaumanoir, in whose mind the suppression of each feeling of humanity which could interfere with his imagined duty, was a virtue of itself, repeated his commands that his victim should be unveiled. The guards were about to remove her veil accordingly, when she stood up before the Grand Master, and said, “Nay, but for the love of your own daughters — alas,” she said, recollecting herself, “ye have no daughters! — yet for the remembrance of your mothers, for the love of your sisters, and of female decency, let me not be thus handled in your presence; it suits not a maiden to be disrobed by such rude grooms. I will obey you,” she added, with an expression of patient sorrow in her voice, which had almost melted the heart of Beaumanoir himself; “ye are elders among your people, and at your command I will show the features of an ill-fated maiden.”

She withdrew her veil, and looked on them with a countenance in which bashfulness contended with dignity. Her exceeding beauty excited a murmur of surprise. But Higg, the son of Snell, felt most deeply the effect produced by the sight of the countenance of his benefactress. “Let me go forth,” he said to the warders at the door of the hall — “let me go forth! To look at her again will kill me, for I have had a share in murdering her.”

“Peace, poor man,” said Rebecca, when she heard his exclamation — “thou hast done me no harm by speaking



the truth; thou canst not aid me by thy complaints or lamentations. Peace, I pray thee — go home and save thyself.”

Higg was about to be thrust out by the compassion of the warders, who were apprehensive lest his clamorous grief should draw upon them reprehension, and upon himself punishment. But he promised to be silent, and was permitted to remain. Two men-at-arms, with whom Albert Malvoisin had not failed to communicate upon the import of their testimony, were now called forward. Both were hardened and inflexible villains, and they delivered, with a precision which would have seemed suspicious to more impartial judges, circumstances either altogether fictitious, or trivial, and natural in themselves, but rendered pregnant with suspicion by the exaggerated manner in which they were told, and the sinister commentary which the witnesses added to the facts. Their evidence set forth that Rebecca was heard to mutter to herself in an unknown tongue; that the songs she sung by fits were of a strangely sweet sound, which made the ears of the hearer tingle and his heart throb; that she spoke at times to herself, and seemed to look upward for a reply; that her garments were of a strange and mystic form, unlike those of women of good repute; that she had rings impressed with cabalistical devices, and that strange characters were broidered on her veil. All these circumstances, so natural and so trivial, were gravely listened to as proofs, or at least as affording strong suspicions, that Rebecca had unlawful correspondence with mystical powers.

But there was less equivocal testimony, which the credulity of the assembly, or of the greater part, greedily swallowed, however incredible. One of the soldiers had seen her work a cure upon a wounded man brought with



them to the castle of Torquilstone. She did, he said, make certain signs upon the wound, and repeated certain mysterious words, which he blessed God he understood not, when the iron head of a square cross-bow bolt disengaged itself from the wound, the bleeding was stanchd, the wound was closed, and the dying man was, within the quarter of an hour, walking upon the ramparts, and assisting the witness in managing a mangonel, or machine for hurling stones. This legend was probably founded upon the fact that Rebecca had attended on the wounded Ivanhoe when in the castle of Torquilstone. But it was the more difficult to dispute the accuracy of the witness as, in order to produce real evidence in support of his verbal testimony, he drew from his pouch the very bolt head which, according to his story, had been miraculously extracted from the wound; and as the iron weighed a full ounce, it completely confirmed the tale, however marvelous.

His comrade had been a witness from a neighboring battlement of the scene betwixt Rebecca and Bois-Guilbert, when she was upon the point of precipitating herself from the top of the tower. Not to be behind his companion, this fellow stated that he had seen Rebecca perch herself upon the parapet of the turret, and there take the form of a milk-white swan, under which appearance she flitted three times round the castle of Torquilstone; then again settle on the turret, and once more assume the female form.

Less than one half of this weighty evidence would have been sufficient to convict any old woman, poor and ugly, even though she had not been a Jewess. United with that fatal circumstance, the body of proof was too weighty for Rebecca's youth, though combined with the most exquisite beauty.



The Grand Master had collected the suffrages, and now in a solemn tone demanded of Rebecca what she had to say against the sentence of condemnation which he was about to pronounce.

“ To invoke your pity,” said the lovely Jewess, with a voice somewhat tremulous with emotion, “ would, I am aware, be as useless as I should hold it mean. To state that to relieve the sick and wounded of another religion cannot be displeasing to the acknowledged Founder of both our faiths, were also unavailing; to plead that many things which these men (whom may Heaven pardon!) have spoken against me are impossible, would avail me but little, since you believe in their possibility; and still less would it advantage me to explain that the peculiarities of my dress, language, and manners are those of my people — I had well-nigh said of my country, but, alas! we have no country. Nor will I even vindicate myself at the expense of my oppressor, who stands there listening to the fictions and surmises which seem to convert the tyrant into the victim.— God be judge between him and me! but rather would I submit to ten such deaths as your pleasure may denounce against me than listen to the suit which that man of Belial has urged upon me — friendless, defenseless, and his prisoner. But he is of your own faith, and his lightest affirmance would weigh down the most solemn protestations of the distressed Jewess. I will not therefore return to himself the charge brought against me; but to himself — yes, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, to thyself I appeal, whether these accusations are not false? as monstrous and calumnious as they are deadly? ”

There was a pause; all eyes turned to Brian de Bois-Guilbert. He was silent.

“ Speak,” she said, “ if thou art a man; if thou art a



Christian, speak! I conjure thee, by the habit which thou dost wear — by the name thou dost inherit — by the knighthood thou dost vaunt — by the honor of thy mother — by the tomb and the bones of thy father — I conjure thee to say, are these things true? ”

“ Answer her, Brother,” said the Grand Master, “ if the Enemy with whom thou dost wrestle will give thee power.”

In fact, Bois-Guilbert seemed agitated by contending passions, which almost convulsed his features, and it was with a constrained voice that at last he replied, looking at Rebecca: “ The scroll! — the scroll! ”

“ Aye,” said Beaumanoir, “ this is indeed testimony! The victim of her witcheries can only name the fatal scroll, the spell inscribed on which is, doubtless, the cause of his silence.”

But Rebecca put another interpretation on the words extorted as it were from Bois-Guilbert, and glancing her eye upon the slip of parchment which she continued to hold in her hand, she read written thereupon in the Arabian character, “ Demand a Champion! ” The murmuring commentary which ran through the assembly at the strange reply of Bois-Guilbert gave Rebecca leisure to examine and instantly to destroy the scroll unobserved. When the whisper had ceased, the Grand Master spoke.

“ Rebecca, thou canst derive no benefit from the evidence of this unhappy knight, for whom, as we well perceive, the Enemy is yet too powerful. Hast thou aught else to say? ”

“ There is yet one chance of life left to me,” said Rebecca, “ even by your own fierce laws. Life has been miserable — miserable, at least, of late — but I will not cast away the gift of God while He affords me the means



of defending it. I deny this charge — I maintain my innocence, and I declare the falsehood of this accusation — I challenge the privilege of trial by combat, and will appear by my champion.”

“ And who, Rebecca,” replied the Grand Master, “ will lay lance in rest for a sorceress? who will be the champion of a Jewess? ”

“ God will raise me up a champion,” said Rebecca. “ It cannot be that in merry England — the hospitable, the generous, the free, where so many are ready to peril their lives for honor — there will not be found one to fight for justice. But it is enough that I challenge the trial by combat — there lies my gage.”

She took her embroidered glove from her hand, and flung it down before the Grand Master with an air of mingled simplicity and dignity, which excited universal surprise and admiration.

Even Lucas Beaumanoir himself was affected by the mien and appearance of Rebecca. He was not originally a cruel man, but his heart had been hardened by the ascetic life which he pursued. His features relaxed in their usual severity as he gazed upon the beautiful creature before him, alone, unfriended, and defending herself with so much spirit and courage.

“ Give me her glove,” said Beaumanoir. “ This is indeed,” he continued, as he looked at the flimsy texture and slender fingers, “ a slight and frail gage for a purpose so deadly! — Seest thou, Rebecca, as this thin and light glove of thine is to one of our heavy steel gauntlets, so is thy cause to that of the Temple, for it is our Order which thou hast defied.”

“ Cast my innocence into the scale,” answered Rebecca, “ and the glove of silk shall outweigh the glove of iron.”



“ Then thou dost persist in thy refusal to confess thy guilt, and in that bold challenge which thou hast made? ”

“ I do persist, noble sir,” answered Rebecca.

“ So be it then, in the name of Heaven,” said the Grand Master; “ and may God show the right! ”

“ Amen,” replied the Preceptors around him, and the word was deeply echoed by the whole assembly.

“ Brethren,” said Beaumanoir, “ you are aware that we might well have refused to this woman the benefit of the trial by combat — but, though a Jewess and an unbeliever, she is also a stranger and defenseless, and God forbid that she should ask the benefit of our mild laws, and that it should be refused to her. Moreover, we are knights and soldiers as well as men of religion, and shame it were to us, upon any pretense, to refuse proffered combat. Thus, therefore, stands the case: Rebecca, the daughter of Isaac of York, is, by many frequent and suspicious circumstances, defamed of sorcery practiced on the person of a noble knight of our Holy Order, and hath challenged the combat in proof of her innocence. To whom, reverend brethren, is it your opinion that we should deliver the gage of battle, naming him, at the same time, to be our champion on the field? ”

“ To Brian de Bois-Guilbert, whom it chiefly concerns,” said the Preceptor of Goodalricke, “ and who, moreover, best knows how the truth stands in this matter.”

“ Thou sayest right, brother,” said the Grand Master. “ Albert Malvoisin, give this gage of battle to Brian de Bois-Guilbert.— It is our charge to thee, brother,” he continued, addressing himself to Bois-Guilbert, “ that thou do thy battle manfully, nothing doubting that the good cause shall triumph.— And do thou, Rebecca, at-



tend, that we assign thee the third day from the present to find a champion."

"That is but brief space," answered Rebecca, "for a stranger who is also of another faith, to find one who will do battle, wagering life and honor for her cause, against a knight who is called an approved soldier."

"We may not extend it," answered the Grand Master; "the field must be foughten in our presence, and divers weighty causes call us on the fourth day from hence."

"God's will be done!" said Rebecca; "I put my trust in Him, to whom an instant is as effectual to save as a whole age."

"Thou hast spoken well, damsel," said the Grand Master. "It remains but to name a fitting place of combat, and, if it so hap, also of execution.—Where is the Preceptor of this house?"

Albert Malvoisin, still holding Rebecca's glove in his hand, was speaking to Bois-Guilbert very earnestly, but in a low voice.

"How!" said the Grand Master, "will he not receive the gage?"

"He will—he doth, most reverend father," said Malvoisin, slipping the glove under his own mantle. "And for the place of combat, I hold the fittest to be the lists of St. George belonging to this Preceptory, and used by us for military exercise."

"It is well," said the Grand Master. "Rebecca, in those lists shalt thou produce thy champion; and if thou failest to do so, or if thy champion shall be discomfited by the judgment of God, thou shalt then die the death of a sorceress, according to doom."

Rebecca spoke not, but she looked up to Heaven, and, folding her hands, remained for a minute without change of attitude. She then modestly reminded the Grand



Master that she ought to be permitted some opportunity of free communication with her friends, for the purpose of making her condition known to them, and procuring, if possible, some champion to fight in her behalf.

“It is just and lawful,” said the Grand Master.

“Is there,” said Rebecca, “any one here, who, either for love of a good cause or for ample hire, will do the errand of a distressed being?” Rebecca stood for a few moments in indescribable anxiety, and then exclaimed, “Is it really thus? — and in English land am I to be deprived of the poor chance of safety which remains to me, for want of an act of charity which would not be refused to the worst criminal?”

Higg, the son of Snell, at length replied, “I am but a maimed man, but that I can at all stir or move was owing to her charitable assistance. I will do thine errand,” he added, addressing Rebecca, “as well as a crippled object can, and happy were my limbs fleet enough to repair the mischief done by my tongue. Alas! when I boasted of thy charity, I little thought I was leading thee into danger!”

“God,” said Rebecca, “is the disposer of all. To execute His message the snail is as sure a messenger as the falcon. Seek out Isaac of York — here is that will pay for horse and man — let him have this scroll. I know not if it be of Heaven the spirit which inspires me, but most truly do I judge that I am not to die this death, and that a champion will be raised up for me. Farewell! Life and death are in thy haste.”

The peasant took the scroll, which contained only a few lines in Hebrew. Many of the crowd would have dissuaded him from touching a document so suspicious; but Higg was resolute in the service of his benefactress.



She had saved his body, he said, and he was confident she did not mean to peril his soul.

“ I will get me,” he said, “ my neighbor Buthan’s good horse, and I will be at York within as brief space as man and beast may.”

But, as it fortuneed, he had no occasion to go so far, for within a quarter of a mile from the gate of the Preceptory he met with two riders whom, by their dress and their huge yellow caps, he knew to be Jews; and on approaching more nearly, he discovered that one of them was his ancient employer, Isaac of York.



## CHAPTER XXX

“ HAVE WE TRAITORS HERE? ”

WHEN the Black Knight — for it becomes necessary to resume the train of his adventures — left the trysting-tree of the generous Outlaw, he held his way straight to a neighboring religious house of small extent and revenue, called the Priory of St. Botolph, to which the wounded Ivanhoe had been removed when the castle was taken, under the guidance of the faithful Gurth and the magnanimous Wamba. After long and grave communication, messengers were despatched by the Prior in several directions. On the succeeding morning the Black Knight was about to set forth on his journey, accompanied by the jester, Wamba, who attended as his guide.

“ We will meet,” he said to Ivanhoe, “ at Coningsburgh, the castle of the deceased Athelstane, since there thy father Cedric holds the funeral feast for his noble relation. I would see your Saxon kindred together, Sir Wilfred, and become better acquainted with them than heretofore; and it shall be my task to reconcile thee to thy father.”

So saying, he took an affectionate farewell of Ivanhoe, who expressed an anxious desire to attend upon his deliverer. But the Black Knight would not listen to the proposal.

“ Rest this day; thou wilt have scarce strength enough to travel on the next. I will have no guide with me but



honest Wamba, who can play priest or fool as I shall be most in the humor."

"Sir Knight of the Fetterlock, since it is your pleasure so to be distinguished," said Ivanhoe, "I fear me you have chosen a talkative and a troublesome fool to be your guide. But he knows every path and alley in the woods as well as e'er a hunter who frequents them; and the poor knave, as thou hast partly seen, is as faithful as steel."

"Nay," said the Knight, "an he have the gift of showing my road, I shall not grumble with him that he desires to make it pleasant. Fare thee well, kind Wilfred — I charge thee not to attempt to travel till to-morrow at earliest."

So saying, he extended his hand to Ivanhoe, who pressed it to his lips, took leave of the Prior, mounted his horse, and departed, with Wamba for his companion. Ivanhoe followed them with his eyes until they were lost in the shades of the surrounding forest, and then returned into the convent.

But shortly after matin-song he requested to see the Prior. The old man came in haste, and inquired anxiously after the state of his health.

"It is better," he said, "than my fondest hope could have anticipated; either my wound has been slighter than the effusion of blood led me to suppose, or this balsam hath wrought a wonderful cure upon it. I feel already as if I could bear my corselet; and so much the better, for thoughts pass in my mind which render me unwilling to remain here longer in inactivity."

"Now, the saints forbid," said the Prior, "that the son of the Saxon Cedric should leave our convent ere his wounds were healed! It were shame to our profession were we to suffer it."



“Nor would I desire to leave your hospitable roof, venerable father,” said Ivanhoe, “did I not feel myself able to endure the journey, and compelled to undertake it.”

“And what can have urged you to so sudden a departure?” said the Prior.

“Have you never, holy father,” answered the Knight, “felt an apprehension of approaching evil, for which you in vain attempted to assign a cause? — have you never found your mind darkened, like the sunny landscape, by the sudden cloud, which augurs a coming tempest? — And thinkest thou not that such impulses are deserving of attention, as being the hints of our guardian spirits that danger is impending?”

“I may not deny,” said the Prior, crossing himself, “that such things have been, and have been of Heaven. But thou, wounded as thou art, what avails it thou shouldst follow the steps of him whom thou couldst not aid, were he to be assaulted?”

“Prior,” said Ivanhoe, “thou dost mistake — I am stout enough to exchange buffets with any who will challenge me to such a traffic — But were it otherwise, may I not aid him, were he in danger, by other means than by force of arms? It is but too well known that the Saxons love not the Norman race, and who knows what may be the issue if he break in upon them when their hearts are irritated by the death of Athelstane, and their heads heated by the carousal in which they will indulge themselves? I hold his entrance among them at such a moment most perilous, and I am resolved to share or avert the danger; which, that I may the better do, I would crave of thee the use of some palfrey whose pace may be softer than that of my war-horse.”

“Surely,” said the worthy churchman; “you shall



have mine own ambling jennet, and I would it ambled as easy for your sake as that of the Abbot of St. Alban's. Yet this I will say for Malkin, for so I call her, that unless you were to borrow a ride on the juggler's steed that paces a hornpipe amongst the eggs, you could not go a journey on a creature so gentle and smooth-paced."

"I pray you, reverend father," said Ivanhoe, "let Malkin be got ready instantly, and bid Gurth attend me with mine arms."

Ivanhoe now descended the stairs more hastily and easily than his wound promised, and having leapt on his mare, and commanded his squire (for such Gurth now called himself) to keep close by his side, he followed the track of the Black Knight into the forest.

In the meantime, the Black Champion and his guide were pacing at their leisure through the recesses of the forest; the good Knight whiles humming to himself the lay of some enamored troubadour, sometimes encouraging by questions the prating disposition of his attendant, so that their dialogue formed a whimsical mixture of song and jest. You are then to imagine this Knight, such as we have already described him, strong of person, tall, broad-shouldered, and large of bone, mounted on his mighty black charger, which seemed made on purpose to bear his weight, so easily he paced forward under it, having the visor of his helmet raised, in order to admit freedom of breath, yet keeping the beaver, or under part, closed, so that his features could be but imperfectly distinguished. But his ruddy, embrowned cheek-bones could be plainly seen, and the large and bright blue eyes, that flashed from under the dark shade of the raised visor; and the whole gesture and look of the champion expressed careless gayety and fearless confidence.



The Jester wore his usual fantastic habit, but late accidents had led him to adopt a good cutting falchion, instead of his wooden sword, with a shield to match it; of both which weapons he had, notwithstanding his profession, shown himself a skillful master during the storming of Torquilstone.

Indeed, the infirmity of Wamba's brain consisted chiefly in a kind of impatient irritability, which suffered him not long to remain quiet in any posture, or adhere to any certain train of ideas, although he was for a few minutes alert enough in performing any immediate task, or in apprehending any immediate topic.

“ The merry men of the forest,” said Wamba, “ set off the building of a cottage with the burning of a castle, the thatching of a choir against the robbing of a church, the setting afree a poor prisoner against the murder of a proud sheriff, or, to come nearer to our point, the deliverance of a Saxon franklin against the burning alive of a Norman baron. Gentle thieves they are, in short, and courteous robbers. And yet,” said Wamba, coming close up to the Knight's side, “ there be companions who are far more dangerous for travelers to meet than yonder outlaws.”

“ And who may they be, for you have neither bears nor wolves, I trow? ” said the Knight.

“ Marry, sir, but we have Malvoisin's men-at-arms,” said Wamba; “ and let me tell you that, in time of civil war, a half-score of these is worth a band of wolves at any time. They are now expecting their harvest, and are reinforced with the soldiers that escaped from Torquilstone; so that, should we meet with a band of them, we are like to pay for our feats of arms.— Now, I pray you, Sir Knight, what would you do if we met two of them? ”



“ Pin the villains to the earth with my lance, Wamba, if they offered us any impediment.”

“ But what if there were four of them? ”

“ They should drink of the same cup,” answered the Knight.

“ What if six,” continued Wamba, “ and we as we now are, barely two; would you not remember Locksley’s horn? ”

“ What! sound for aid,” exclaimed the Knight, “ against a score of such rascaille as these, whom one good knight could drive before him, as the wind drives the withered leaves? ”

“ Nay, then,” said Wamba, “ I will pray you for a close sight of that same horn that hath so powerful a breath.”

The Knight undid the clasp of the baldric, and indulged his fellow-traveler, who immediately hung the bugle round his own neck.

“ Tra-lira-la,” said he, whistling the notes; “ nay, I know my gamut as well as another.”

“ How mean you, knave? ” said the Knight; “ restore me the bugle.”

“ Content you, Sir Knight, it is in safe keeping. When Valor and Folly travel, Folly should bear the horn, because she can blow the best.”

“ Nay, but, rogue,” said the Black Knight, “ this exceedeth thy license — Beware ye tamper not with my patience.”

“ Urge me not with violence, Sir Knight,” said the Jester, keeping at a distance from the impatient champion, “ or Folly will show a clean pair of heels, and leave Valor to find out his way through the wood as best he may.”

“ Nay, thou hast hit me there,” said the Knight;



"and, sooth to say, I have little time to jangle with thee. Keep the horn an thou wilt, but let us proceed on our journey."

"You will not harm me, then?" said Wamba.

"I tell thee no, thou knave!"

"Aye, but pledge me your knightly word for it," continued Wamba, as he approached with great caution.

"My knightly word I pledge; only come on with thy foolish self."

"Nay, then, Valor and Folly are once more boon companions," said the Jester, coming up frankly to the Knight's side; "but, in truth, I love not such buffets as that you bestowed on the burly Friar, when his holiness rolled on the green like a king of the nine-pins. And now that Folly wears the horn, let Valor rouse himself and shake his mane; for, if I mistake not, there are company in yonder brake that are on the lookout for us."

"What makes thee judge so?" said the Knight.

"Because I have twice or thrice noticed the glance of a morion from among the green leaves. Had they been honest men, they had kept the path. But yonder thicket is a choice chapel for the clerks of St. Nicholas."

"By my faith," said the Knight, closing his visor, "I think thou be'st in the right on't."

And in good time did he close it, for three arrows flew at the same instant from the suspected spot against his head and breast, one of which would have penetrated to the brain, had it not been turned aside by the steel visor. The other two were averted by the gorget, and by the shield which hung around his neck.

"Thanks, trusty armorer," said the Knight. "Wamba, let us close with them,"—and he rode straight to the thicket. He was met by six or seven



men-at-arms, who ran against him with their lances at full career. Three of the weapons struck against him, and splintered with as little effect as if they had been driven against a tower of steel. The Black Knight's eyes seemed to flash fire even through the aperture of his visor. He raised himself in his stirrups with an air of inexpressible dignity, and exclaimed, "What means this, my masters?"—The men made no other reply than by drawing their swords and attacking him on every side, crying, "Die, tyrant!"

"Ha! St. Edward! Ha! St. George!" said the Black Knight, striking down a man at every invocation; "have we traitors here?"

His opponents, desperate as they were, bore back from an arm which carried death in every blow, and it seemed as if the terror of his single strength was about to gain the battle against such odds, when a knight in blue armor, who had hitherto kept himself behind the other assailants, spurred forward with his lance, and taking aim, not at the rider but at the steed, wounded the noble animal mortally.

"That was a felon stroke!" exclaimed the Black Knight, as the steed fell to the earth, bearing his rider along with him.

And at this moment Wamba winded the bugle, for the whole had passed so speedily that he had not time to do so sooner. The sudden sound made the murderers bear back once more, and Wamba, though so imperfectly weaponed, did not hesitate to rush in and assist the Black Knight to rise.

"Shame on ye, false cowards!" exclaimed he in the blue harness, who seemed to lead the assailants, "do ye fly from the empty blast of a horn blown by a Jester?"



Animated by his words, they attacked the Black Knight anew, whose best refuge was now to place his back against an oak, and defend himself with his sword. The felon knight, who had taken another spear, watching the moment when his formidable antagonist was most closely pressed, galloped against him in hopes to nail him with his lance against the tree, when his purpose was again intercepted by Wamba. The Jester, making up by agility the want of strength, and little noticed by the men-at-arms, who were busied in their more important object, hovered on the skirts of the fight, and effectually checked the fatal career of the Blue Knight, by hamstringing his horse with a stroke of his sword. Horse and man went to the ground; yet the situation of the Knight of the Fetterlock continued very precarious, as he was pressed close by several men completely armed, and began to be fatigued by the violent exertions necessary to defend himself on so many points at nearly the same moment, when a gray-goose shaft suddenly stretched on the earth one of the most formidable of his assailants, and a band of yeomen broke forth from the glade, headed by Locksley and the jovial Friar, who, taking ready and effectual part in the fray, soon disposed of the ruffians, all of whom lay on the spot dead or mortally wounded. The Black Knight thanked his deliverers with a dignity they had not observed in his former bearing, which hitherto had seemed rather that of a blunt, bold soldier than of a person of exalted rank.

“It concerns me much,” he said, “even before I express my full gratitude to my ready friends, to discover, if I may, who have been my unprovoked enemies.—Open the visor of that Blue Knight, Wamba, who seems the chief of these villains.”

The Jester instantly made up to the leader of the



assassins, who, bruised by his fall, and entangled under the wounded steed, lay incapable either of flight or resistance.

“Come, valiant sir,” said Wamba, “I must be your armorer as well as your equerry—I have dismounted you, and now I will unhelm you.”

So saying, with no very gentle hand he undid the helmet of the Blue Knight, which, rolling to a distance on the grass, displayed to the Knight of the Fetterlock grizzled locks, and a countenance he did not expect to have seen under such circumstances.

“Waldemar Fitzurse!” he said in astonishment; “what could urge one of thy rank and seeming worth to so foul an undertaking?”

“Richard,” said the captive Knight, looking up to him, “thou knowest little of mankind, if thou knowest not to what ambition and revenge can lead every child of Adam.”

“Revenge!” answered the Black Knight; “I never wronged thee—On me thou hast nought to revenge.”

“My daughter, Richard, whose alliance thou didst scorn—was that no injury to a Norman, whose blood is noble as thine own?”

“Thy daughter!” replied the Black Knight. “A proper cause of enmity, and followed up to a bloody issue!—Stand back, my masters, I would speak to him alone—And now, Waldemar Fitzurse, say me the truth: confess who set thee on this traitorous deed.”

“Thy father’s son,” answered Waldemar, “who, in so doing, did but avenge on thee thy disobedience to thy father.”

Richard’s eyes sparkled with indignation, but his better nature overcame it. He pressed his hand against his brow, and remained an instant gazing on the face of



the humbled baron, in whose features pride was contending with shame.

“Thou dost not ask thy life, Waldemar?” said the King.

“He that is in the lion’s clutch,” answered Fitzurse, “knows it were needless.”

“Take it, then, unasked,” said Richard; “the lion preys not on prostrate carcasses — Take thy life, but with this condition, that in three days thou shalt leave England, and go to hide thine infamy in thy Norman castle, and that thou wilt never mention the name of John of Anjou as connected with thy felony. If thou art found on English ground after the space I have allotted thee, thou diest — or if thou breathest aught that can attain the honor of my house, by St. George! not the altar itself shall be a sanctuary. I will hang thee out to feed the ravens from the very pinnacle of thine own castle. Let this knight have a steed, Locksley, for I see your yeomen have caught those which were running loose, and let him depart unharmed.”

“But that I judge I listen to a voice whose behests must not be disputed,” answered the yeoman, “I would send a shaft after the skulking villain that should spare him the labor of a long journey.”

“Thou bearest an English heart, Locksley,” said the Black Knight, “and well dost judge thou art the more bound to obey my behest — I am Richard of England!”

At these words, pronounced in a tone of majesty suited to the high rank, and no less distinguished character, of Cœur-de-Lion, the yeomen at once kneeled down before him, and at the same time tendered their allegiance, and implored pardon for their offenses.

“Rise, my friends,” said Richard, in a gracious tone. “Your misdemeanors, whether in forest or field, have



been atoned by the loyal services you rendered my distressed subjects before the walls of Torquilstone, and the rescue you have this day afforded to your sovereign. Arise, my liegemen, and be good subjects in future.— And thou, brave Locksley —”

“ Call me no longer Locksley, my Liege, but know me under the name which, I fear, fame hath blown too widely not to have reached even your royal ears — I am Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest.”

“ King of outlaws and Prince of good fellows! ” said the King, “ who hath not heard a name that has been borne as far as Palestine? But be assured, brave Outlaw, that no deed done in our absence, and in the turbulent times to which it hath given rise, shall be remembered to thy disadvantage.”

“ I confess! I confess! ” exclaimed, in a submissive tone, a voice near the King’s side; “ I confess my deadly treason, and pray leave to have absolution before I am led to execution! ”

Richard looked around, and beheld the jovial Friar on his knees, telling his rosary, while his quarter-staff, which had not been idle during the skirmish, lay on the grass beside him. His countenance was gathered so as he thought might best express the most profound contrition, his eyes being turned up, and the corners of his mouth drawn down, as Wamba expressed it, like the tassels at the mouth of a purse. Yet this demure affectation of extreme penitence was whimsically belied by a ludicrous meaning which lurked in his huge features, and seemed to pronounce his fear and repentance alike hypocritical.

“ For what art thou cast down, mad priest? ” said Richard; “ art thou afraid thy diocesan should learn how truly thou dost serve Our Lady and St. Dunstan?





“‘Rise, my friends,’ said Richard.”







Tush, man! fear it not; Richard of England betrays no secrets that pass over the flagon.”

“Nay, most gracious sovereign,” answered the hermit (well known to the curious in penny histories of Robin Hood by the name of Friar Tuck), “it is not the crosier I fear, but the scepter. Alas! that my sacrilegious fist should ever have been applied to the ear of the Lord’s anointed!”

“Ha! ha!” said Richard, “sits the wind there? — In truth, I had forgotten the buffet, though mine ear sung after it for a whole day. But if the cuff was fairly given, I will be judged by the good men around, if it was not as well repaid — or, if thou thinkest I still owe thee aught, and wilt stand forth for another counter-buff —”

“By no means,” replied Friar Tuck, “I had mine own returned, and with usury — may your majesty ever pay your debts as fully!”

“If I could do so with cuffs,” said the King, “my creditors should have little reason to complain of an empty exchequer.”

“And yet,” said the Friar, resuming his demure, hypocritical countenance, “I know not what penance I ought to perform for that most sacrilegious blow!”

“Speak no more of it, brother,” said the King; “after having stood so many cuffs from Paynims and misbelievers, I were void of reason to quarrel with the buffet of a clerk so holy as he of Copmanhurst. And the holy clerk shall have a grant of vert and venison in my woods of Wharncliffe. Mark, however, I will but assign thee three bucks every season; but if that do not prove an apology for thy slaying thirty, I am no Christian Knight nor true King. And as venison is but dry food, our cellarer shall have orders to deliver to thee a butt of sack,



a runlet of Malvoisie, and three hogsheads of ale of the first strike, yearly. If that will not quench thy thirst, thou must come to court, and become acquainted with my butler.”

The Friar bowed profoundly, and fell into the rear.

At the same time, two additional personages appeared on the scene.



## CHAPTER XXXI

### ROBIN HOOD OF SHERWOOD FOREST.

THE new-comers were Wilfred of Ivanhoe, on the Prior of Botolph's palfrey, and Gurth, who attended him, on the knight's own war-horse. The astonishment of Ivanhoe was beyond bounds when he saw his master besprinkled with blood, and six or seven dead bodies lying around in the little glade in which the battle had taken place. Nor was he less surprised to see Richard surrounded by so many silvan attendants, the outlaws, as they seemed to be, of the forest, and a perilous retinue therefore for a prince. He hesitated whether to address the King as the Black Knight-errant, or in what other manner to demean himself towards him. Richard saw his embarrassment.

"Fear not, Wilfred," he said, "to address Richard Plantagenet as himself, since thou seest him in the company of true English hearts, although it may be they have been urged a few steps aside by warm English blood."

"Sir Wilfred of Ivanhoe," said the gallant Outlaw, stepping forward, "my assurances can add nothing to those of our sovereign; yet, let me say somewhat proudly, that of men who have suffered much, he hath no truer subjects than those who now stand around him."

"I cannot doubt it, brave man," said Wilfred, "since thou art of the number. But what mean these marks of



death and danger — these slain men, and the bloody armor of my prince? ”

“ Treason hath been with us, Ivanhoe,” said the King; “ but, thanks to these brave men, treason hath met its meed. But, now I bethink me, thou too art a traitor,” said Richard, smiling — “ a most disobedient traitor; for were not our orders positive that thou shouldst repose thyself at St. Botolph’s until thy wound was healed? ”

“ It is healed,” said Ivanhoe — “ it is not of more consequence than the scratch of a bodkin. But why — oh why, noble Prince, will you thus vex the hearts of your faithful servants, and expose your life by lonely journeys and rash adventures, as if it were of no more value than that of a mere knight-errant, who has no interest but what lance and sword may procure him? ”

“ And Richard Plantagenet,” said the King, “ desires no more fame than his good lance and sword may acquire him; and Richard Plantagenet is prouder of achieving an adventure, with only his good sword and his good arm to speed, than if he led to battle an host of an hundred thousand armed men.”

“ But your kingdom, my Liege,” said Ivanhoe — “ your kingdom is threatened with dissolution and civil war — your subjects are menaced with every species of evil, if deprived of their sovereign in some of those dangers which it is your daily pleasure to incur, and from which you have but this moment narrowly escaped.”

“ Ho! ho! my kingdom and my subjects! ” answered Richard, impatiently; “ I tell thee, Sir Wilfred, the best of them are most willing to repay my follies in kind. — For example, my very faithful servant, Wilfred of Ivanhoe, will not obey my positive commands, and yet reads his King a homily, because he does not walk exactly by



his advice. Which of us has most reason to upbraid the other? — Yet forgive me, my faithful Wilfred. The time I have spent, and am yet to spend, in concealment, is, as I explained to thee at St. Botolph's, necessary to give my friends and faithful nobles time to assemble their forces. Too sudden an appearance would subject me to dangers other than my lance and sword, though backed by the bow of bold Robin, or the quarter-staff of Friar Tuck, and the horn of the sage Wamba, may be able to rescue me from."

Wilfred bowed in submission; while Richard, rejoiced at having silenced his counselor, though his heart acknowledged the justice of the charge he had brought against him, went on in conversation with Robin Hood. "King of Outlaws," he said, "have you no refreshment to offer to your brother sovereign? for these dead knaves have found me both in exercise and appetite."

"In troth," replied the Outlaw, "for I scorn to lie to your Grace, our larder is chiefly supplied with —" He stopped, and was somewhat embarrassed.

"With venison, I suppose?" said Richard, gayly; "better food at need there can be none; and truly, if a King will not remain at home and slay his own game, methinks he should not brawl too loud if he finds it killed to his hand."

"If your Grace, then," said Robin, "will again honor with your presence one of Robin Hood's places of rendezvous, the venison shall not be lacking; and a stoup of ale, and it may be a cup of reasonably good wine, to relish it withal."

Beneath a huge oak-tree the silvan repast was hastily prepared for the King of England, surrounded by men outlaws to his government, but who now formed his court and his guard. As the flagon went round, the rough



foresters soon lost their awe for the presence of Majesty. The merry King, nothing heeding his dignity any more than his company, laughed, quaffed, and jested among the jolly band. The natural and rough sense of Robin Hood led him to be desirous that the scene should be closed ere anything should occur to disturb its harmony. "We are honored," he said to Ivanhoe, apart, "by the presence of our gallant sovereign; yet I would not that he dallied with time which the circumstances of his kingdom may render precious."

"It is well and wisely spoken, brave Robin Hood," said Wilfred, apart; "and know, moreover, that they who jest with Majesty, even in its gayest mood, are but toying with the lion's whelp, which, on slight provocation, uses both fangs and claws."

"You have touched the very cause of my fear," said the Outlaw. "My men are rough by practice and nature; the King is hasty as well as good-humored; nor know I how soon cause of offense may arise, or how warmly it may be received—it is time this revel were broken off."

"It must be by your management, then, gallant yeoman," said Ivanhoe; "for each hint I have essayed to give him serves only to induce him to prolong it."

"Must I so soon risk the pardon and favor of my sovereign?" said Robin Hood, pausing for an instant; "but, by St. Christopher, it shall be so. I were undeserving his grace did I not peril it for his good.—Here, Scathlock, get thee behind yonder thicket, and wind me a Norman blast on thy bugle, and without an instant's delay, on peril of your life."

Scathlock obeyed his captain, and in less than five minutes the revelers were startled by the sound of his horn.



“It is the bugle of Malvoisin,” said the Miller, starting to his feet, and seizing his bow. The Friar dropped the flagon, and grasped his quarter-staff. Wamba stopped short in the midst of a jest, and betook himself to sword and target. All the others stood to their weapons.

Men of their precarious course of life change readily from the banquet to the battle; and to Richard the exchange seemed but a succession of pleasure. He called for his helmet and the most cumbrous parts of his armor, which he had laid aside; and while Gurth was putting them on, he laid his strict injunctions on Wilfred, under pain of his highest displeasure, not to engage in the skirmish which he supposed was approaching.

“Thou hast fought for me an hundred times, Wilfred, and I have seen it. Thou shalt this day look on, and see how Richard will fight for his friend and liegeman.”

In the meantime, Robin Hood had sent off several of his followers in different directions, as if to reconnoiter the enemy; and when he saw the company effectually broken up, he approached Richard, who was now completely armed, and, kneeling down on one knee, craved pardon of his sovereign.

“For what, good yeoman?” said Richard, somewhat impatiently. “Have we not already granted thee a full pardon for all transgressions? Thinkest thou our word is a feather, to be blown backward and forward between us? Thou canst not have had time to commit any new offense since that time?”

“Aye, but I have though,” answered the yeoman, “if it be an offense to deceive my prince for his own advantage. The bugle you have heard was none of Malvoisin’s, but blown by my direction, to break off the



banquet, lest it trenched upon hours of dearer import than to be thus dallied with."

He then rose from his knee, folded his arms on his bosom, and, in a manner rather respectful than submissive, awaited the answer of the King, like one who is conscious he may have given offense, yet is confident in the rectitude of his motive. The blood rushed in anger to the countenance of Richard; but it was the first transient emotion, and his sense of justice instantly subdued it.

"The King of Sherwood," he said, "grudges his venison and his wine-flask to the King of England! It is well, bold Robin! but when you come to see me in merry London, I trust to be a less niggard host. Thou art right, however, good fellow. Let us therefore to horse and away. Wilfred has been impatient this hour."

Robin Hood assured them that he had detached a party in the direction of the road they were to pass, who would not fail to discover and apprise them of any secret ambuscade; and that he had little doubt they would find the ways secure. The Outlaw's opinion proved true; and the King, attended by Ivanhoe, Gurth and Wamba, arrived without any interruption within view of the Castle of Coningsburgh, while the sun was yet in the horizon.

A huge black banner, which floated from the top of the tower, announced that the obsequies of the late owner were still in the act of being solemnized. Above the gate was another banner, on which the figure of a white horse, rudely painted, indicated the nation and rank of the deceased, by the well-known symbol of Hengist and his Saxon warriors. All around the castle was a scene of busy commotion; for such funeral banquets were times of general and profuse hospitality, which not only every



one who could claim the most distant connection with the deceased, but all passengers whatsoever, were invited to partake.

The seneschal or steward deigned not to take notice of the groups of inferior guests who were perpetually entering and withdrawing, unless so far as was necessary to preserve order; nevertheless, he was struck by the good mien of the Monarch and Ivanhoe, more especially as he imagined the features of the latter were familiar to him. Besides, the approach of two knights, for such their dress bespoke them, was a rare event at a Saxon solemnity, and could not but be regarded as a sort of honor to the deceased and his family. And in his sable dress, and holding in his hand his white wand of office, this important personage made way through the miscellaneous assemblage of guests, thus conducting Richard and Ivanhoe to the entrance of the tower. Gurth and Wamba speedily found acquaintances in the court-yard, nor presumed to intrude themselves any farther until their presence should be required.



## CHAPTER XXXII

### ATHELSTANE'S OBSEQUIES

THE good King Richard, followed by his faithful Ivanhoe, was ushered into the round apartment which occupies the whole of the third story of Coningsburgh Castle. Wilfred, by the difficulties of the ascent, gained time to muffle his face in his mantle, as it had been held expedient that he should not present himself to his father until the King should give him the signal.

There were assembled in this apartment, around a large oaken table, about a dozen of the most distinguished representatives of the Saxon families in the adjacent counties. The downcast and sorrowful looks of these venerable men, their silence and their mournful posture, formed a strong contrast to the levity of the revelers on the outside of the castle.

Cedric, seated in equal rank among his countrymen, seemed yet, by common consent, to act as chief of the assembly. Upon the entrance of Richard (known to him only as the valorous Knight of the Fetterlock) he arose gravely, and gave him welcome by the ordinary salutation, "Wassail!" raising at the same time a goblet to his head. The King, no stranger to the customs of his English subjects, returned the greeting with the appropriate words, "Drink hail!" and partook of a cup which was handed to him by the sewer. The same courtesy was offered to Ivanhoe, who pledged his father in silence,



supplying the usual speech by an inclination of his head, lest his voice should be recognized.

When this introductory ceremony was performed, Cedric arose, and, extending his hand to Richard, conducted him into a small and very rude chapel, which was excavated, as it were, out of one of the external buttresses. As there was no opening, saving a very narrow loophole, the place would have been nearly quite dark but for two torches, which showed, by a red and smoky light, the arched roof and naked walls, the rude altar of stone, and the crucifix of the same material.

Before this altar was placed a bier, and on each side of this bier kneeled three priests, who told their beads, and muttered their prayers, with the greatest signs of external devotion. Richard and Wilfred followed Cedric's example in devoutly crossing themselves, and muttering a brief prayer for the weal of the departed soul.

This act of pious charity performed, Cedric again motioned them to follow him, gliding over the stone floor with a noiseless tread; and, after ascending a few steps, he opened with great caution the door of a small oratory, which adjoined the chapel. It was about eight feet square, hollowed, like the chapel itself, out of the thickness of the wall; and the loophole which enlightened it being to the west, and widening considerably as it sloped inward, a beam of the setting sun found its way into its dark recess, and showed a female of a dignified mien, and whose countenance retained the marked remains of majestic beauty.

“ Noble Edith,” said Cedric, after having stood a moment silent, as if to give Richard and Wilfred time to look upon the lady of the mansion, “ these are worthy strangers come to take a part in thy sorrows. And this, in especial, is the valiant knight who fought so bravely



for the deliverance of him for whom we this day mourn.”

“ His bravery has my thanks,” returned the lady; “ although it be the will of Heaven that it should be displayed in vain. I thank, too, his courtesy, and that of his companion, which hath brought them hither to behold the widow of Adeling, the mother of Athelstane, in her deep hour of sorrow and lamentation. To your care, kind kinsman, I entrust them, satisfied that they will want no hospitality which these sad walls can yet afford.”

The guests bowed deeply to the mourning parent, and withdrew with their hospitable guide.

Another winding stair conducted them to an apartment of the same size with that which they had first entered, occupying, indeed, the story immediately above. From this room, ere yet the door was opened, proceeded a low and melancholy strain of vocal music. When they entered, they found themselves in the presence of about twenty matrons and maidens of distinguished Saxon lineage. Four maidens, Rowena leading the choir, raised a hymn for the soul of the deceased.

While this dirge was sung, in a low and melancholy tone, by the female choristers, the others were divided into two bands, of which one was engaged in bedecking, with such embroidery as their skill and taste could compass, a large silken pall, destined to cover the bier of Athelstane, while the others busied themselves in selecting, from baskets of flowers placed before them, garlands, which they intended for the same mournful purpose. Rowena paid her greeting to her deliverer with a graceful courtesy. Her demeanor was serious, but not dejected; and it may be doubted whether thoughts of Ivanhoe, and the uncertainty of his fate, did not claim as great a share in her gravity as the death of her kinsman.



To Cedric, however, who, as we have observed, was not remarkably clear-sighted on such occasions, the sorrow of his ward seemed so much deeper than any of the other maidens, that he deemed it proper to whisper the explanation,—“ She was the affianced bride of the noble Athelstane.”—It may be doubted whether this communication went a far way to increase Wilfred's disposition to sympathize with the mourners of Coningsburgh.

Having thus formally introduced the guests to the different chambers in which the obsequies of Athelstane were celebrated under different forms, Cedric conducted them into a small room, destined, as he informed them, for the exclusive accommodation of honorable guests, whose more slight connection with the deceased might render them unwilling to join those who were immediately affected by the unhappy event. He assured them of every accommodation, and was about to withdraw when the Black Knight took his hand.

“ I crave to remind you, noble thane,” he said, “ that when we last parted you promised, for the service I had the fortune to render you, to grant me a boon.”

“ It is granted ere named, noble Knight,” said Cedric; “ yet, at this sad moment —”

“ Of that also,” said the King, “ I have bethought me; but my time is brief; neither does it seem to me unfit that, when closing the grave on the noble Athelstane, we should deposit therein certain prejudices and hasty opinions.”

“ Sir Knight of the Fetterlock,” said Cedric, coloring, and interrupting the King in his turn, “ I trust your boon regards yourself and no other; for in that which concerns the honor of my house, it is scarce fitting that a stranger should mingle.”

“ Nor do I wish to mingle,” said the King, mildly,



“ unless in so far as you will admit me to have an interest. As yet you have known me but as the Black Knight of the Fetterlock — Know me now as Richard Plantagenet.”

“ Richard of Anjou! ” exclaimed Cedric, stepping backward with the utmost astonishment.

“ No, noble Cedric — Richard of England! — whose deepest interest — whose deepest wish, is to see her sons united with each other. And how now, worthy thane! hast thou no knee for thy prince? ”

“ To Norman blood,” said Cedric, “ it hath never bended.”

“ Reserve thine homage then,” said the Monarch, “ until I shall prove my right to it by my equal protection of Normans and English.”

“ Prince,” answered Cedric, “ I have ever done justice to thy bravery and thy worth. Nor am I ignorant of thy claim to the crown through thy descent from Matilda, niece to Edgar Atheling, and daughter to Malcolm of Scotland. But Matilda, though of the royal Saxon blood, was not the heir to the monarchy.”

“ I will not dispute my title with thee, noble thane,” said Richard calmly; “ but I will bid thee look around thee, and see where thou wilt find another to be put into the scale against it.”

“ And hast thou wandered hither, Prince, to tell me so? ” said Cedric — “ to upbraid me with the ruin of my race, ere the grave has closed o’er the last scion of Saxon royalty? ” His countenance darkened as he spoke. “ It was boldly — it was rashly done! ”

“ Not so, by the holy rood! ” replied the King; “ it was done in the frank confidence which one brave man may repose in another, without a shadow of danger.”



“Thou sayest well, Sir King — for King I own thou art, and wilt be, despite of my feeble opposition.”

“And now to my boon,” said the King, “which I ask not with one jot the less confidence, that thou hast refused to acknowledge my lawful sovereignty. I require of thee, as a man of thy word, on pain of being held faithless, man-sworn, and worthless, to forgive and receive to thy paternal affection the good knight, Wilfred of Ivanhoe. In this reconciliation thou wilt own I have an interest — the happiness of my friend, and the quelling of dissension among my faithful people.”

“And this is Wilfred!” said Cedric, pointing to his son.

“My father! — my father!” said Ivanhoe, prostrating himself at Cedric’s feet, “grant me thy forgiveness!”

“Thou hast it, my son,” said Cedric, raising him up. “The son of Hereward knows how to keep his word, even when it has been passed to a Norman. Thou art about to speak,” he added, sternly, “and I guess the topic. The Lady Rowena must complete two years’ mourning, as for a betrothed husband — all our Saxon ancestors would disown us were we to treat of a new union for her ere the grave of him she should have wedded — him so much the most worthy of her hand by birth and ancestry — is yet closed. The ghost of Athelstane himself would burst his bloody cerements, and stand before us to forbid such dishonor to his memory.”

It seemed as if Cedric’s words had raised a specter: for scarce had he uttered them ere the door flew open, and Athelstane, arrayed in the garments of the grave, stood before them, pale, haggard, and like something arisen from the dead!

In the meantime a horrible noise was heard below



stairs, some crying, "Secure the treacherous monks!"—others, "Down with them into the dungeon!"—others, "Pitch them from the highest battlements!"

"If thou art mortal, speak!" said Cedric—"if a departed spirit, say for what cause thou dost revisit us, or if I can do aught that can set thy spirit at repose.—Living or dead, noble Athelstane, speak to Cedric!"

"I will," said the specter, very composedly, "when I have collected breath, and when you give me time.—Alive, saidst thou? I am as much alive as he can be who has fed on bread and water for three days, which seem three ages."

"Why, noble Athelstane," said the Black Knight, "I myself saw you struck down by the fierce Templar towards the end of the storm at Torquilstone, and, as I thought, and Wamba reported, your skull was cloven through the teeth."

"You thought amiss, Sir Knight," said Athelstane, "and Wamba lied. My teeth are in good order, and that my supper shall presently find. No thanks to the Templar, though, whose sword turned in his hand, so that the blade struck me flatlings, being averted by the handle of the good mace with which I warded the blow. Down I went, stunned, indeed, but unwounded. I never recovered my senses until I found myself in a coffin—an open one, by good luck!—placed before the altar of the church of St. Edmund's. I sneezed repeatedly—groaned—awakened, and would have arisen, when the Sacristan and Abbot, full of terror, came running at the noise, surprised, doubtless, and no way pleased, to find the man alive whose heirs they had proposed themselves to be. I asked for wine—they gave me some, but it must have been highly medicated, for I slept yet more deeply than before, and awakened not for many hours. I found my



arms swathed down, my feet tied so fast that mine ankles ache at the very remembrance; the place was utterly dark — the oubliette, as I suppose, of their accursed convent. I had strange thoughts of what had befallen me, when the door of my dungeon creaked, and two villain monks entered. They would have persuaded me I was in purgatory, but I knew too well the pursy, short-breathed voice of the Father Abbot.— St. Jeremy! how different from that tone with which he used to ask me for another slice of the haunch! — A barley loaf and a pitcher of water — that *they* gave me, the niggardly traitors.

“ I should have been there still, had not some stir in the convent, which I find was their procession hitherward to eat my funeral feast, when they well knew how and where I had been buried alive, summoned the swarm out of their hive. I waited long for food; no wonder — the gouty Sacristan was even too busy with his own provender to mind mine. At length down he came, with an unstable step and a strong flavor of wine and spices about his person. Good cheer had opened his heart, for he left me a nook of pasty and a flask of wine instead of my former fare. I ate, drank, and was invigorated; when, to add to my good luck, the Sacristan, too totty to discharge his duty of turnkey fitly, locked the door beside the staple, so that it fell ajar. The light, the food, the wine, set my invention to work. The staple to which my chains were fixed was more rusted than I or the villain Abbot had supposed. Even iron could not remain without consuming in the damps of that infernal dungeon.

“ Finding myself freed from the staple, I dragged myself upstairs as well as a man loaded with shackles, and emaciated with fasting, might; and after much grop-



ing about, I was at length directed, by the sound of a jolly roundelay, to the apartment where the worthy Sacristan, an it please ye, was holding a devil's mass with a huge, beetle-browed, broad-shouldered brother of the gray-frock and cowl, who looked much more like a thief than a clergyman. I burst in upon them. Both stood aghast; but when I knocked down the Sacristan with my fist, the other fellow, his pot-companion, fetched a blow at me with a huge quarter-staff."

"This must be our Friar Tuck, for a count's ransom," said Richard, looking at Ivanhoe.

"He may be the devil, an he will," said Athelstane. "Fortunately, he missed the aim; and on my approaching to grapple with him, took to his heels and ran for it. I failed not to set my own heels at liberty by means of the fetter-key, which hung among others at the sexton's belt, pouched some baked meat and a leathern bottle of wine, with which the two venerable brethren had been regaling, went to the stable, and found in a private stall mine own best palfrey, which, doubtless, had been set apart for the holy Father Abbot's particular use. Hither I came with all the speed the beast could compass — man and mother's son flying before me wherever I came, taking me for a specter. I did but disclose myself to my mother, and eat a hasty morsel, ere I came in quest of you, my noble friend."

"And you have found me," said Cedric, "ready to resume our brave projects of honor and liberty. I tell thee, never will dawn a morrow so auspicious as the next, for the deliverance of the noble Saxon race."

"Talk not to me of delivering any one," said Athelstane; "it is well I am delivered myself. I am more intent on punishing that villain Abbot. He shall hang on the top of this Castle of Coningsburgh, in his cope



and stole : and if the stairs be too straight to admit his fat carcass, I will have him craned up from without."

"For shame, noble Athelstane," said Cedric; "forget such wretches in the career of glory which lies open before thee. Tell this Norman prince, Richard of Anjou, that, lion-hearted as he is, he shall not hold undisputed the throne of Alfred, while a male descendant of the Holy Confessor lives to dispute it."

"How!" said Athelstane, "is this the noble King Richard?"

"It is Richard Plantagenet himself," said Cedric; "yet I need not remind thee that, coming hither a guest of free-will, he may neither be injured nor detained prisoner — thou well knowest thy duty to him as his host."

"Aye, by my faith!" said Athelstane; "and my duty as a subject besides, for I here tender him my allegiance, heart and hand."

"My son," said Edith, "think on thy royal rights!"

"Think on the freedom of England, degenerate prince!" said Cedric.

"Mother and friend," said Athelstane, "a truce to your upbraidings! Bread and water and a dungeon are marvelous mortifiers of ambition, and I rise from the tomb a wiser man than I descended into it. One half of those vain follies were puffed into mine ear by that perfidious Abbot Wolfram, and you may now judge if he is a counselor to be trusted. Since these plots were set in agitation, I have had nothing but hurried journeys, indigestions, blows and bruises, imprisonments, and starvation; besides that they can only end in the murder of some thousands of quiet folk. I tell you, I will be king in my own domains, and nowhere else; and my first act of dominion shall be to hang the Abbot."



“ And my ward Rowena,” said Cedric — “ I trust you intend not to desert her? ”

“ Father Cedric,” said Athelstane, “ be reasonable. The Lady Rowena cares not for me; she loves the little finger of my kinsman Wilfred’s glove better than my whole person. There she stands to avouch it.—Nay, blush not, kinswoman; there is no shame in loving a courtly knight better than a country franklin. Give me thy hand, or rather lend it me, for I but ask it in the way of friendship. Here, cousin Wilfred of Ivanhoe, in thy favor I renounce and abjure — Hey! by St. Dunstan, our cousin Wilfred hath vanished! ”

All now looked around and inquired for Ivanhoe. It was at length discovered that a Jew had been to seek him; and that, after very brief conference, he had called for Gurth and his armor, and had left the castle.

“ Fair cousin,” said Athelstane to Rowena, “ could I think that this sudden disappearance of Ivanhoe was occasioned by other than the weightiest reason, I would myself resume — ”

But he had no sooner let go her hand, on first observing that Ivanhoe had disappeared, than Rowena, who had found her situation extremely embarrassing, had taken the first opportunity to escape from the apartment.

“ Certainly,” quoth Athelstane, “ women are the least to be trusted of all animals, monks and abbots excepted. I am an infidel, if I expected not thanks from her, and perhaps a kiss to boot. These cursed grave-clothes have surely a spell on them, every one flies from me.—To you I turn, noble King Richard, with the vows of allegiance, which, as a liege subject — ”

But King Richard was gone also, and no one knew whither. At length it was learned that he had hastened to the court-yard, summoned to his presence the Jew who



had spoken with Ivanhoe, and, after a moment's speech with him, had called vehemently to horse, thrown himself upon a steed, compelled the Jew to mount another, and set off at a rate which, according to Wamba, rendered the old Jew's neck not worth a penny's purchase.



## CHAPTER XXXIII

### THE LISTS OF TEMPLESTOWE

THE exterior of the Castle, or Preceptory, of Templestowe, about the hour when the bloody die was to be cast for the life or death of Rebecca, was a scene of bustle and life, as if the whole vicinity had poured forth its inhabitants to a village wake or rural feast. The eyes, therefore, of a very considerable multitude were bent on the gate of the Preceptory, with the purpose of witnessing the procession; while still greater numbers had already surrounded the tiltyard belonging to that establishment. This inclosure was formed on a piece of level ground adjoining the Preceptory, which had been leveled with care, for the exercise of military and chivalrous sports. It occupied the brow of a soft and gentle eminence, and was amply supplied with galleries and benches.

On the present occasion, a throne was erected for the Grand Master at the east end, surrounded with seats of distinction for the Preceptors and Knights of the Order.

At the opposite end of the lists was a pile of faggots, so arranged around a stake, deeply fixed in the ground, as to leave a space for the victim whom they were destined to consume, to enter within the fatal circle, in order to be chained to the stake by the fetters which hung ready for that purpose. Beside this deadly apparatus stood four black slaves, whose color and African features, then so little known in England, appalled the multitude;



who could scarcely help believing that they were actually the familiar spirits with whom the witch had communed, and who, her time being out, stood ready to assist in her dreadful punishment. They whispered to each other, and communicated all the feats which Satan had performed during that busy and unhappy period, not failing, of course, to give the devil rather more than his due.

“Have you not heard, father Dennet,” quoth one boor to another advanced in years, “that the devil has carried away bodily the great Saxonthane, Athelstane of Coningsburgh?”

“Aye, but he brought him back, though, by the blessing of God and St. Dunstan.”

“How’s that?” said a brisk young fellow, dressed in a green cassock embroidered with gold, and having at his heels a stout lad bearing a harp upon his back, which betrayed his vocation. “How mean you by that?” said the gay Minstrel, mingling in the conversation of the peasants; “I came to seek one subject for my rhyme, and, by’r Lady, I were glad to find two.”

“Aye, aye — construe us the story,” said a burly Friar, who stood beside them leaning on a pole that exhibited an appearance between a pilgrim’s staff and a quarter-staff, and probably acted as either when occasion served — “your story,” said the stalwart churchman. “Burn not daylight about it; we have short time to spare.”

“An please your reverence,” said Dennet, “a drunken priest came to visit the Sacristan at St. Edmund’s — ”

“It does not please my reverence,” answered the churchman, “that there should be such an animal as a drunken priest, or if there were, that a layman should so speak him.”



“ Well, then,” answered father Dennet, “ a holy brother came to visit the Sacristan at St. Edmund’s — a sort of hedge-priest is the visitor, and kills half the deer that are stolen in the forest, who loves the tinkling of a pint-pot better than the sacring-bell, and deems a fitch of bacon worth ten of his breviary — ”

“ But the story — the story, my friend,” again said the Minstrel.

“ Why, the tale is but this — Athelstane of Coningsburgh was buried at St. Edmund’s.”

“ That’s a lie, and a loud one,” said the Friar, “ for I saw him borne to his own Castle of Coningsburgh.”

“ Nay, then, e’en tell the story yourself, my masters,” said Dennet; and it was with some difficulty that the boor could be prevailed on, by the request of his comrade and the Minstrel, to renew his tale. “ These two *sober* friars,” said he at length, “ since this reverend man will needs have them such, had continued drinking good ale, and wine, and what not, for the best part of a summer’s day, when they were aroused by a deep groan, and a clanking of chains, and the figure of the deceased Athelstane entered the apartment, saying ‘ Ye evil shepherds — ! ’ ”

“ It is false,” said the Friar, hastily, “ he never spoke a word.”

“ So ho! Friar Tuck,” said the Minstrel, drawing him apart from the rustics; “ we have started a new hare, I find.”

“ I tell thee, Allan-a-Dale,” said the hermit, “ I saw Athelstane of Coningsburgh as much as bodily eyes ever saw a living man. He had his shroud on, and all about him smelt of the sepulcher. A butt of sack will not wash it out of my memory. Never believe me, an I fetched not a knock at him with my quarter-staff that



would have felled an ox, and it glided through his body as it might through a pillar of smoke! ”

“ By St. Hubert,” said the Minstrel, “ but it is a wondrous tale, and fit to be put in meter to the ancient tune, ‘ Sorrow came to the Old Friar.’ ”

“ Laugh, if ye list,” said Friar Tuck; “ but an ye catch me singing on such a theme may the next ghost or devil carry me off with him headlong! No, no — I instantly formed the purpose of assisting at some good work, such as the burning of a witch, a judicial combat, or the like matter of godly service, and therefore am I here.”

As they thus conversed, the heavy bell of the church of St. Michael of Templestowe broke short their argument. One by one the sullen sounds fell successively on the ear, leaving but sufficient space for each to die away in distant echo, ere the air was again filled by repetition of the iron knell. These sounds, the signal of the approaching ceremony, chilled with awe the hearts of the assembled multitude, whose eyes were now turned to the Preceptory, expecting the approach of the Grand Master, the champion, and the criminal.

At length the drawbridge fell, the gates opened, and a knight, bearing the great standard of the Order, sallied from the castle, preceded by six trumpets, and followed by the Knights Preceptors, two and two, the Grand Master coming last, mounted on a stately horse. Behind him came Brian de Bois-Guilbert, armed cap-à-pie in bright armor, but without his lance, shield, and sword, which were borne by his two esquires behind him. His face, though partly hidden by a long plume which floated down from his barret-cap, bore a strong and mingled expression of passion, in which pride seemed to contend with irresolution.



On either side rode Conrade of Mont-Fitchet and Albert de Malvoisin, who acted as godfathers to the champion. They were in their robes of peace, the white dress of the Order. Behind them followed other companions of the Temple, with a long train of esquires and pages clad in black. After these neophytes came a guard of warders on foot, in the same sable livery, amidst whose partisans might be seen the pale form of the accused, moving with a slow but undismayed step towards the scene of her fate. She was stripped of all her ornaments, lest perchance there should be among them some of those amulets which Satan was supposed to bestow upon his victims, to deprive them of the power of confession even when under the torture. A coarse white dress, of the simplest form, had been substituted for her Oriental garments; yet there was such an exquisite mixture of courage and resignation in her look that even in this garb, and with no other ornament than her long black tresses, each eye wept that looked upon her, and the most hardened bigot regretted the fate that had converted a creature so goodly into a vessel of wrath, and a wage slave of the devil.

A crowd of inferior personages belonging to the Preceptory followed the victim, all moving with the utmost order, with arms folded and looks bent upon the ground.

This slow procession moved up the gentle eminence, on the summit of which was the tiltyard, and, entering the lists, marched once around them. There was then a momentary bustle, while the Grand Master and all his attendants, excepting the champion and his godfathers, dismounted from their horses.

The unfortunate Rebecca was conducted to the black chair placed near the pile. On her first glance at the



terrible spot where preparations were making for a death alike dismaying to the mind and painful to the body, she was observed to shudder and shut her eyes, praying internally, doubtless, for her lips moved, though no speech was heard. In the space of a minute she opened her eyes, looked fixedly on the pile as if to familiarize her mind with the object, and then slowly and naturally turned away her head.

Meanwhile, the Grand Master had assumed his seat; and when the chivalry of his Order was placed around and behind him, each in his due rank, a loud and long flourish of the trumpets announced that the court were seated for judgment. Malvoisin then, acting as godfather of the champion, stepped forward, and laid the glove of the Jewess, which was the pledge of battle, at the feet of the Grand Master.

“ Valorous lord and reverend father,” said he, “ here standeth the good knight, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, Knight Preceptor of the Order of the Temple, who, by accepting the pledge of battle which I now lay at your reverence’s feet, hath become bound to do his devoir in combat this day, to maintain that this Jewish maiden, by name Rebecca, hath justly deserved the doom passed upon her in a chapter of this most Holy Order of the Temple of Zion, condemning her to die as a sorceress — here, I say, he standeth, such battle to do, knightly and honorable, if such be your noble and sanctified pleasure.”

“ Hath he made oath,” said the Grand Master, “ that his quarrel is just and honorable? Bring forward the crucifix.”

“ Sir and most reverend father,” answered Malvoisin, readily, “ our brother here present hath already sworn to the truth of his accusation in the hand of the good knight Conrade de Mont-Fitchet; and otherwise he ought not to



be sworn, seeing that his adversary is an unbeliever, and may take no oath."

This explanation was satisfactory, to Albert's great joy; for the wily knight had foreseen the great difficulty, or rather impossibility, of prevailing upon Brian de Bois-Guilbert to take such an oath before the assembly, and had invented this excuse to escape the necessity of his doing so.

The Grand Master, having allowed the apology of Albert Malvoisin, commanded the herald to stand forth and do his duty. The trumpets then again flourished, and a herald, stepping forward, proclaimed aloud: "Oyez, oyez, oyez.—Here standeth the good knight, Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, ready to do battle with any knight of free blood who will sustain the quarrel allowed and allotted to the Jewess Rebecca, to try by champion, in respect of lawful excuse of her own body; and to such champion the reverend and valorous Grand Master here present allows a fair field, and equal partition of sun and wind, and whatever else appertains to a fair combat." The trumpets again sounded, and there was a dead pause of many minutes.

"No champion appears for the appellant," said the Grand Master. "Go, herald, and ask her whether she expects any one to do battle for her in this her cause."

The herald went to the chair in which Rebecca was seated; and Bois-Guilbert, suddenly turning his horse's head toward that end of the lists, in spite of hints on either side from Malvoisin and Mont-Fitchet, was by the side of Rebecca's chair as soon as the herald.

"Is this regular, and according to the law of combat?" said Malvoisin, looking at the Grand Master.

"Albert de Malvoisin, it is," answered Beaumanoir; "for in this appeal to the judgment of God we may not



prohibit parties from having that communication with each other which may best tend to bring forth the truth of the quarrel.”

In the meantime, the herald spoke to Rebecca in these terms: “Damsel, the honorable and reverend the Grand Master demands of thee, if thou art prepared with a champion to do battle this day in thy behalf, or if thou dost yield thee as one justly condemned to a deserved doom?”

“Say to the Grand Master,” replied Rebecca, “that I maintain my innocence, and do not yield me as justly condemned, lest I become guilty of mine own blood. Say to him, that I challenge such delay as his forms will permit, to see if God, whose opportunity is in man’s extremity, will raise me up a deliverer; and when such uttermost space is passed, may His holy will be done!”

The herald retired to carry this answer to the Grand Master.

“God forbid,” said Lucas Beaumanoir, “that Jew or Pagan should impeach us of injustice! Until the shadows be cast from the west to the eastward, will we wait to see if a champion shall appear for this unfortunate woman. When the day is so far passed, let her prepare for death.”

The herald communicated the words of the Grand Master to Rebecca, who bowed her head submissively, folded her arms, and, looking up towards heaven, seemed to expect that aid from above which she could scarce promise herself from man. During this awful pause, the voice of Bois-Guilbert broke upon her ear; it was but a whisper, yet it startled her more than the summons of the herald had appeared to do.

“Rebecca,” said the Templar, “dost thou hear me?”



“ I have no portion in thee, cruel, hard-hearted man,” said the unfortunate maiden.

“ Aye, but dost thou understand my words? ” said the Templar; “ for the sound of my voice is frightful in mine own ears. I scarce know on what ground we stand, or for what purpose they have brought us hither. This listed space — that chair — these faggots — I know their purpose, and yet it appears to me like something unreal — the fearful picture of a vision, which appalls my sense with hideous fantasies, but convinces not my reason.”

“ My mind and senses keep touch and time,” answered Rebecca, “ and tell me alike that these faggots are destined to consume my earthly body, and open a painful but a brief passage to a better world.”

“ Dreams, Rebecca — dreams,” answered the Templar. “ Hear me, Rebecca,” he said, proceeding with animation; “ a better chance hast thou for life and liberty than yonder knaves and dotard dream of. Mount thee behind me on my steed — on Zamor, the gallant horse that never failed his rider. I won him in single fight from the Soldan of Trebizond. Mount, I say, behind me; in one short hour is pursuit and inquiry far behind — a new world of pleasure opens to thee — to me a new career of fame. Let them speak the doom which I despise, and erase the name of Bois-Guilbert from their list of monastic slaves! I will wash out with blood whatever blot they may dare to cast on my scutcheon.”

“ Tempter,” said Rebecca, “ begone! Not in this last extremity canst thou move me one hair’s-breadth from my resting-place. Surrounded as I am by foes, I hold thee as my worst and most deadly enemy; avoid thee, in the name of God! ”

Albert Malvoisin, alarmed and impatient at the



duration of their conference, now advanced to interrupt it.

“Hath the maiden acknowledged her guilt?” he demanded of Bois-Guilbert; “or is she resolute in her denial?”

“She is indeed *resolute*,” said Bois-Guilbert.

“Then,” said Malvoisin, “must thou, noble brother, resume thy place to attend the issue. The shades are changing on the circle of the dial.—Come, brave Bois-Guilbert—come, thou hope of our Holy Order, and soon to be its head.”

As he spoke in this soothing tone, he laid his hand on the knight’s bridle, as if to lead him back to his station.

“False villain! what meanest thou by thy hand on my rein?” said Sir Brian, angrily. And, shaking off his companion’s grasp, he rode back to the upper end of the lists.

“There is yet spirit in him,” said Malvoisin apart to Mont-Fitchet, “were it well directed; but, like the Greek fire, it burns whatever approaches it.”

The judges had now been two hours in the lists, awaiting in vain the appearance of a champion.

“And reason good,” said Friar Tuck, “seeing she is a Jewess; and yet, by mine Order, it is hard that so young and beautiful a creature should perish without one blow being struck in her behalf! Were she ten times a witch, provided she were but the least bit of a Christian, my quarter-staff should ring noon on the steel cap of yonder fierce Templar, ere he carried the matter off thus.”

It was, however, the general belief that no one could or would appear for a Jewess accused of sorcery; and the knights, instigated by Malvoisin, whispered to each other that it was time to declare the pledge of Rebecca forfeited. At this instant a knight, urging his horse to



speed, appeared on the plain advancing towards the lists. A hundred voices exclaimed, "A champion! — a champion!" And, despite the prepossessions and prejudices of the multitude, they shouted unanimously as the knight rode into the tiltyard. The second glance, however, served to destroy the hope that his timely arrival had excited. His horse, urged for many miles to its utmost speed, appeared to reel from fatigue, and the rider, however undauntedly he presented himself in the lists, either from weakness, weariness, or both, seemed scarce able to support himself in the saddle.

To the summons of the herald, who demanded his rank, his name, and purpose, the stranger knight answered readily and boldly: "I am a good knight and noble, come hither to sustain with lance and sword the just and lawful quarrel of this damsel, Rebecca, daughter of Isaac of York; to uphold the doom pronounced against her to be false and truthless, and to defy Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, as a traitor, murderer, and liar; as I will prove in this field with my body against his, by the aid of God, of Our Lady, and of Monseigneur St. George, the good knight."

"The stranger must first show," said Malvoisin, "that he is good knight, and of honorable lineage. The Temple sendeth not forth her champions against nameless men."

"My name," said the knight, raising his helmet, "is better known, my lineage more pure, Malvoisin, than thine own. I am Wilfred of Ivanhoe."

"I will not fight with thee at present," said the Templar, in a changed and hollow voice. "Get thy wounds healed, purvey thee a better horse, and it may be I will hold it worth my while to scourge out of thee this boyish spirit of bravado."



“Ha! proud Templar,” said Ivanhoe, “hast thou forgotten that twice thou didst fall before this lance? Remember the lists at Acre — remember the Passage of Arms at Ashby — remember thy proud vaunt in the halls of Rotherwood, and the gage of your gold chain against my reliquary, that thou wouldst do battle with Wilfred of Ivanhoe, and recover the honor thou hadst lost! By that reliquary, and the holy relic it contains, I will proclaim thee, Templar, a coward in every court in Europe — in every Preceptory of thine Order — unless thou do battle without farther delay.”

Bois-Guilbert turned his countenance irresolutely towards Rebecca, and then exclaimed, looking fiercely at Ivanhoe: “Dog of a Saxon! take thy lance, and prepare for the death thou hast drawn upon thee!”

“Does the Grand Master allow me the combat?” said Ivanhoe.

“I may not deny what thou hast challenged,” said the Grand Master, “provided the maiden accepts thee as her champion. Yet I would thou wert in better plight to do battle. An enemy of our Order hast thou ever been, yet would I have thee honorably met with.”

“Thus — thus as I am, and not otherwise,” said Ivanhoe; “it is the judgment of God — to his keeping I commend myself. Rebecca,” said he, riding up to the fatal chair, “dost thou accept me for thy champion?”

“I do,” she said — “I do,” fluttered by an emotion which the fear of death had been unable to produce — “I do accept thee as the champion whom Heaven hath sent me. Yet, no — no — thy wounds are uncured — Meet not that proud man — why shouldst thou perish also?”

But Ivanhoe was already at his post, and had closed his visor, and assumed his lance. Bois-Guilbert did the



same; and his esquire remarked, as he clasped his visor, that his face, which had, notwithstanding the variety of emotions by which he had been agitated, continued during the whole morning of an ashy paleness, was now become suddenly very much flushed.

The herald then, seeing each champion in his place, uplifted his voice, repeating thrice: "Do your duty, gallant knights!" After the third cry, he withdrew to one side of the lists, and again proclaimed that none, on peril of instant death, should dare, by word, cry, or action, to interfere with or disturb this fair field of combat. The Grand Master, who held in his hand the gage of battle, Rebecca's glove, now threw it into the lists, and pronounced the fatal signal words, "Let go!"

The trumpets sounded, and the knights charged each other in full career. The wearied horse of Ivanhoe, and its no less exhausted rider, went down, as all had expected, before the well-aimed lance and vigorous steed of the Templar. This issue of the combat all had foreseen; but although the spear of Ivanhoe did but, in comparison, touch the shield of Bois-Guilbert, that champion, to the astonishment of all who beheld it, reeled in his saddle, lost his stirrups, and fell in the lists.

Ivanhoe, extricating himself from his fallen horse, was soon on foot, hastening to mend his fortune with his sword; but his antagonist arose not. Wilfred, placing his foot on his breast, and the sword's point at his throat, commanded him to yield him, or die on the spot. Bois-Guilbert returned no answer.

"Slay him not, Sir Knight," cried the Grand Master, "unshriven and unabsolved — kill not body and soul! We allow him vanquished."

He descended into the lists, and commanded them to unhelm the conquered champion. His eyes were closed;



the dark red flush was still on his brow. As they looked on him in astonishment, the eyes opened; but they were fixed and glazed. The flush passed from his brow, and gave way to the pallid hue of death. Unscathed by the lance of his enemy, he had died a victim to the violence of his own contending passions.

“ This is indeed the judgment of God,” said the Grand Master, looking upwards — “ Thy will be done! ”



## CHAPTER XXXIV

### REBECCA AND ROWENA

WHEN the first moments of surprise were over, Wilfred of Ivanhoe demanded of the Grand Master, as judge of the field, if he had manfully and rightfully done his duty in the combat.

“Manfully and rightfully hath it been done,” said the Grand Master; “I pronounce the maiden free and guiltless. The arms and the body of the deceased knight are at the will of the victor.”

“I will not despoil him of his weapons,” said the Knight of Ivanhoe, “nor condemn his corpse to shame—he hath fought for Christendom. God’s arm, no human hand, hath this day struck him down. But let his obsequies be private, as becomes those of a man who died in an unjust quarrel.—And for the maiden—”

He was interrupted by a clattering of horses’ feet, advancing in such numbers, and so rapidly, as to shake the ground before them; and the Black Knight galloped into the lists. He was followed by a numerous band of men-at-arms, and several knights in complete armor.

“I am too late,” he said, looking around him. “I had doomed Bois-Guilbert for mine own property.—Ivanhoe, was this well, to take on thee such a venture, and thou scarce able to keep thy saddle?”

“Heaven, my Liege,” answered Ivanhoe, “hath taken



this proud man for its victim. He was not to be honored in dying as your will had designed."

"Peace be with him," said Richard, looking steadfastly on the corpse, "if it may be so; he was a gallant knight, and has died in his steel harness full knightly. But we must waste no time — Bohun, do thine office!"

A knight stepped forward from the King's attendants, and, laying his hand on the shoulder of Albert de Malvoisin, said, "I arrest thee of high treason."

The Grand Master had hitherto stood astonished at the appearance of so many warriors. He now spoke.

"Who dares to arrest a knight of the Temple of Zion, within the girth of his own Preceptory, and in the presence of the Grand Master? and by whose authority is this bold outrage offered?"

"I make the arrest," replied the knight — "I, Henry Bohun, Earl of Essex, Lord High Constable of England."

"And he arrests Malvoisin," said the King, raising his visor, "by the order of Richard Plantagenet, here present. Conrade Mont-Fitchet, it is well for thee thou art born no subject of mine. But for thee, Malvoisin, thou diest with thy brother Philip, ere the world be a week older."

"I will resist thy doom," said the Grand Master.

"Proud Templar," said the King, "thou canst not — look up, and behold the royal standard of England floats over thy towers instead of thy Temple banner! Be wise, Beaumanoir, and make no bootless opposition. Thy hand is in the lion's mouth."

"I will appeal to Rome against thee," said the Grand Master, "for usurpation on the immunities and privileges of our Order."

"Be it so," said the King; "but for thine own sake



tax me not with usurpation now. Dissolve thy Chapter, and depart with thy followers to thy next Preceptory, if thou canst find one which has not been made the scene of treasonable conspiracy against the King of England. — Or, if thou wilt, remain, to share our hospitality, and behold our justice.”

“To be a guest in the house where I should command?” said the Templar; “never! — Chaplains, raise the Psalm, ‘Why do the heathen rage?’ Knights, squires, and followers of the Holy Temple, prepare to follow the banner of Beau-seant!”

The Grand Master spoke with a dignity which confronted even that of England’s King himself, and inspired courage into his surprised and dismayed followers. They gathered around him like the sheep around the watch-dog, when they hear the baying of the wolf. But they evinced not the timidity of the scared flock; there were dark brows of defiance, and looks which menaced the hostility they dared not to proffer in words. They drew together in a dark line of spears, from which the white cloaks of the knights were visible among the dusky garments of their retainers.

The Earl of Essex, when he beheld them pause in their assembled force, dashed the rowels into his charger’s sides, and galloped backwards and forwards to array his followers, in opposition to a band so formidable. Richard alone, as if he loved the danger his presence had provoked, rode slowly along the front of the Templars, calling aloud: “What, sirs! Among so many gallant knights, will none dare to splinter a spear with Richard? — Sirs of the Temple! your ladies are but sunburned, if they are not worth the shiver of a broken lance!”

“The brethren of the Temple,” said the Grand Mas-



ter, riding forward in advance of their body, "fight not on such idle and profane quarrel; and not with thee, Richard of England, shall a Templar cross lance in my presence. If unassailed, we depart assailing no one. To thine honor we refer the armor and household goods of the Order which we leave behind us, and on thy conscience we lay the scandal and offense thou hast this day given to Christendom."

With these words, and without waiting a reply, the Grand Master gave the signal of departure. Their trumpets sounded a wild march, of an Oriental character, which formed the usual signal for the Templars to advance. They changed their array from a line to a column of march, and moved off as slowly as their horses could step, as if to show it was only the will of their Grand Master, and no fear of the opposing and superior force, which compelled them to withdraw.

"By the splendor of Our Lady's brow!" said King Richard, "it is pity of their lives that these Templars are not so trusty as they are disciplined and valiant."

The multitude, like a timid cur which waits to bark till the object of its challenge has turned his back, raised a feeble shout as the rear of the squadron left the ground.

During the tumult which attended the retreat of the Templars, Rebecca saw and heard nothing; she was locked in the arms of her aged father, giddy, and almost senseless, with the rapid change of circumstances around her. But one word from Isaac at length recalled her scattered feelings.

"Let us go," he said, "my dear daughter, my recovered treasure — let us go to throw ourselves at the feet of the good youth."

"Not so," said Rebecca. "Oh no — no — no! I must not at this moment dare to speak to him. Alas!



I should say more than — No, my father, let us instantly leave this evil place.”

“ But, my daughter,” said Isaac, “ to leave him who hath come forth like a strong man with his spear and shield, holding his life as nothing, so he might redeem thy captivity; and thou, too, the daughter of a people strange unto him and his — this is service to be thankfully acknowledged.”

“ It is — it is — most thankfully — most devoutly acknowledged,” said Rebecca; “ it shall be still more so — but not now — for the sake of thy beloved Rachel, father, grant my request — not now! ”

“ Nay, but,” said Isaac, insisting, “ they will deem us more thankless than mere dogs! ”

“ But thou seest, my dear father, that King Richard is in presence, and that — ”

“ True, my best — my wisest Rebecca. Let us hence — let us hence! Money he will lack, for he has just returned from Palestine, and, as they say, from prison; and pretext for exacting it, should he need any, may arise out of my simple traffic with his brother John. Away — away, let us hence! ”

And hurrying his daughter in his turn, he conducted her from the lists, and, by means of conveyance which he had provided, transported her safely to the house of the Rabbi Nathan.

The Jewess, whose fortunes had formed the principal interest of the day, having now retired unobserved, the attention of the populace was transferred to the Black Knight. They now filled the air with “ Long life to Richard with the Lion’s Heart, and down with the usurping Templars! ”

“ Notwithstanding all this lip-loyalty,” said Ivanhoe to the Earl of Essex, “ it was well the King took the



precaution to bring thee with him, noble Earl, and so many of thy trusty followers."

The Earl smiled and shook his head.

"Gallant Ivanhoe," said Essex, "dost thou know our master so well, and yet suspect him of taking so wise a precaution? I was drawing towards York, having heard that Prince John was making head there, when I met King Richard, like a true knight-errant, galloping hither to achieve in his own person this adventure of the Templar and the Jewess, with his own single arm. I accompanied him with my band, almost in spite of his consent."

"And what news from York, brave Earl?" said Ivanhoe; "will the rebels bide us there?"

"No more than December's snow will bide July's sun," said the Earl; "they are dispersing; and who should come posting to bring us the news, but John himself!"

"The traitor!—the ungrateful, insolent traitor!" said Ivanhoe; "did not Richard order him into confinement?"

"Oh! he received him," answered the Earl, "as if they had met after a hunting party; and, pointing to me and our men-at-arms, said, 'Thou seest, brother, I have some angry men with me; thou wert best go to our mother, carry her my duteous affection, and abide with her until men's minds are pacified.'"

"And this was all he said?" inquired Ivanhoe; "would not any one say that this prince invites men to treason by his clemency?"

"Just," replied the Earl, "as the man may be said to invite death who undertakes to fight a combat, having a dangerous wound unhealed."

"I forgive thee the jest, Lord Earl," said Ivanhoe;



“ but, remember, I hazarded but my own life — Richard, the welfare of his kingdom.”

“ Those,” replied Essex, “ who are specially careless of their own welfare are seldom remarkably attentive to that of others — But let us haste to the castle, for Richard meditates punishing some of the subordinate members of the conspiracy, though he has pardoned their principal.”

From the judicial investigations which followed on this occasion, it appears that Maurice de Bracy escaped beyond seas, and went into the service of Philip of France, while Philip de Malvoisin and his brother Albert, the Preceptor of Templestowe, were executed, although Waldemar Fitzurse, the soul of the conspiracy, escaped with banishment, and Prince John, for whose behoof it was undertaken, was not even censured by his good-natured brother. No one, however, pitied the fate of the two Malvoisins, who only suffered the death which they had both well deserved, by many acts of falsehood, cruelty, and oppression.

Briefly after the judicial combat, Cedric the Saxon was summoned to the court of Richard, which, for the purpose of quieting the counties that had been disturbed by the ambition of his brother, was then held at York. Cedric tushed and pshawed more than once at the message — but he refused not obedience. In fact, the return of Richard had quenched every hope that he had entertained of restoring a Saxon dynasty in England.

Moreover, it could not escape even Cedric's reluctant observation, that his project for an absolute union among the Saxons, by the marriage of Rowena and Athelstane, was now completely at an end, by the mutual dissent of both parties concerned. Even the natural obstinacy of Cedric sunk beneath these obstacles, where



he, remaining on the point of junction, had the task of dragging a reluctant pair up to it, one with each hand.

There remained betwixt Cedric and the determination which the lovers desired to come to, only two obstacles — his own obstinacy, and his dislike of the Norman dynasty. The former feeling gradually gave way before the endearments of his ward and the pride which he could not help nourishing in the fame of his son. Besides, he was not insensible to the honor of allying his own line to that of Alfred, when the superior claims of the descendant of Edward the Confessor were abandoned for ever. Cedric's aversion to the Norman race of kings was also much undermined — first, by consideration of the impossibility of ridding England of the new dynasty, and, secondly, by the personal attention of King Richard, who delighted in the blunt humor of Cedric, and so dealt with the noble Saxon that, ere he had been a guest at court for seven days, he had given his consent to the marriage of his ward and his son.

The nuptials of our hero, thus formally approved by his father, were celebrated in the most august of temples, the noble minster of York. The King himself attended, and, from the countenance which he afforded on this and other occasions to the distressed and hitherto degraded Saxons, gave them a safer and more certain prospect of attaining their just rights than they could reasonably hope from the precarious chance of a civil war.

Gurth, gallantly appareled, attended as esquire upon his young master, whom he had served so faithfully, and the magnanimous Wamba, decorated with a new cap and a most gorgeous set of silver bells. Sharers of Wilfred's dangers and adversity, they remained, as they



had a right to expect, the partakers of his more prosperous career.

It was upon the second morning after this happy bridal that the Lady Rowena was made acquainted by her handmaid Elgitha, that a damsel desired admission to her presence, and solicited that their parley might be without witness. Rowena wondered, hesitated, became curious, and ended by commanding the damsel to be admitted, and her attendants to withdraw.

She entered — a noble and commanding figure, the long white veil in which she was shrouded overshadowing rather than concealing the elegance and majesty of her shape. Rowena was ever ready to acknowledge the claims, and attend to the feelings, of others. She arose, and would have conducted her lovely visitor to a seat; but the stranger looked at Elgitha, and again intimated a wish to discourse with the Lady Rowena alone. Elgitha had no sooner retired with unwilling steps, than, to the surprise of the Lady of Ivanhoe, her fair visitant kneeled on one knee, pressed her hands to her forehead, and bending her head to the ground, in spite of Rowena's resistance, kissed the embroidered hem of her tunic.

“What means this, lady?” said the surprised bride; “or why do you offer me a deference so unusual?”

“Because to you, Lady of Ivanhoe,” said Rebecca, rising up and resuming the usual quiet dignity of her manner, “I may lawfully and without rebuke pay the debt of gratitude which I owe to Wilfred of Ivanhoe. I am — forgive the boldness which has offered to you the homage of my country — I am the unhappy Jewess for whom your husband hazarded his life against such fearful odds in the tiltyard of Templestowe.”

“Damsel,” said Rowena, “Wilfred of Ivanhoe on that day rendered back but in slight measure your



unceasing charity towards him in his wounds and misfortunes. Speak, is there aught remains in which he or I can serve thee? ”

“ Nothing,” said Rebecca, calmly, “ unless you will transmit to him my grateful farewell.”

“ You leave England, then? ” said Rowena, scarcely recovering the surprise of this extraordinary visit.

“ I leave it, lady, ere this moon again changes. My father hath a brother high in favor with Mohammed Boabdil, King of Grenada — thither we go, secure of peace and protection for the payment of such ransom as the Moslem exact from our people.”

“ And are you not then as well protected in England? ” said Rowena. “ My husband has favor with the King; the King himself is just and generous.”

“ Lady,” said Rebecca, “ I doubt it not; but the people of England are a fierce race, quarreling ever with their neighbors or among themselves, and ready to plunge the sword into the bowels of each other. Such is no safe abode for the children of my people. Not in a land of war and blood, surrounded by hostile neighbors, and distracted by internal factions, can Israel hope to rest during her wanderings.”

“ But you, maiden,” said Rowena — “ you surely can have nothing to fear. She who nursed the sick-bed of Ivanhoe,” she continued, rising with enthusiasm, “ she can have nothing to fear in England, where Saxon and Norman will contend who shall most do her honor.”

“ Thy speech is fair, lady,” said Rebecca, “ and thy purpose fairer; but it may not be — there is a gulf betwixt us. Our breeding, our faith, alike forbid either to pass over it. Farewell — yet, ere I go, indulge me one request. The bridal veil hangs over thy face; deign



to raise it, and let me see the features of which fame speaks so highly."

"They are scarce worthy of being looked upon," said Rowena; "but, expecting the same from my visitant, I remove the veil." She took it off accordingly; and, partly from the consciousness of beauty, partly from bashfulness, she blushed so intensely that cheek, brow, neck and bosom were suffused with crimson. Rebecca blushed also; but it was a momentary feeling, and, mastered by higher emotions, passed slowly from her features like the crimson cloud which changes color when the sun sinks beneath the horizon.

"Lady," she said, "the countenance you have deigned to show me will long dwell in my remembrance. There reigns in it gentleness and goodness. Long, long will I remember your features, and bless God that I leave my noble deliverer united with —"

She stopped short — her eyes filled with tears. She hastily wiped them, and answered to the anxious inquiries of Rowena: "I am well, lady — well. But my heart swells when I think of Torquilstone and the lists of Templestowe.—Farewell. One, the most trifling, part of my duty remains undischarged. Accept this casket — startle not at its contents."

Rowena opened the small silver-chased casket, and perceived a carcanet, or necklace, with ear jewels of diamonds, which were obviously of immense value.

"It is impossible," she said, tendering back the casket. "I dare not accept a gift of such consequence."

"Yet keep it, lady," returned Rebecca. "You have power, rank, command, influence; we have wealth, the source both of our strength and weakness; the value of these toys, ten times multiplied, would not influence half so much as your slightest wish. To you, therefore, the



gift is of little value; and to me, what I part with is of much less. Let me not think you deem so wretchedly ill of my nation as your commons believe. Think ye that I prize these sparkling fragments of stone above my liberty? Accept them, lady — to me they are valueless. I will never wear jewels more.”

“ You are then unhappy ! ” said Rowena, struck with the manner in which Rebecca uttered the last words. “ Oh, remain with us; the counsel of holy men will wean you from your erring law, and I will be a sister to you.”

“ No, lady,” answered Rebecca, the same calm melancholy reigning in her soft voice and beautiful features — “ that may not be. I may not change the faith of my fathers like a garment unsuited to the climate in which I seek to dwell; and unhappy, lady, I will not be. He to whom I dedicate my future life will be my comforter, if I do His will.”

“ Have you then convents, to one of which you mean to retire ? ” asked Rowena.

“ No, lady,” said the Jewess; “ but among our people, since the time of Abraham downwards, have been women who have devoted their thoughts to Heaven, and their actions to works of kindness to men — tending the sick, feeding the hungry, and relieving the distressed. Among these will Rebecca be numbered. Say this to thy lord, should he chance to inquire after the fate of her whose life he saved.”

There was an involuntary tremor in Rebecca’s voice, and a tenderness of accent, which perhaps betrayed more than she would willingly have expressed. She hastened to bid Rowena adieu.

“ Farewell,” she said. “ May He who made both Jew and Christian shower down on you His choicest



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blessings! The bark that wafts us hence will be under weigh ere we can reach the port."

She glided from the apartment, leaving Rowena surprised as if a vision had passed before her. The fair Saxon related the singular conference to her husband, on whose mind it made a deep impression. He lived long and happily with Rowena, for they were attached to each other by the bonds of early affection, and they loved each other the more from the recollection of the obstacles which had impeded their union. Yet it would be inquiring too curiously to ask whether the recollection of Rebecca's beauty and magnanimity did not recur to his mind more frequently than the fair descendant of Alfred might altogether have approved.

Ivanhoe distinguished himself in the service of Richard, and was graced with farther marks of the royal favor. He might have risen still higher but for the premature death of the heroic Cœur-de-Lion, before the Castle of Chaluz, near Limoges. With the life of a generous, but rash and romantic, monarch, perished all the projects which his ambition and his generosity had formed; to whom may be applied, with a slight alteration, the lines composed by Johnson for Charles of Sweden —

His fate was destined to a foreign strand,  
A petty fortress and an "humble" hand;  
He left the name at which the world grew pale,  
To point a moral, or adorn a TALE.

(1)

THE END















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